

Chair Weiss thanked the citizens for weathering this difficult year; thanked County staff for working for all the citizens.

Chris Boies introduced Andrew Weatherholt the new Information Technology Systems Administrator.

2) Adoption of Agenda

Vice-Chair McKay moved to adopt the agenda as presented. The motion carried by the following vote:

Matthew E. Bass	-	Aye
Terri T. Catlett	-	Aye
Doug M. Lawrence	-	Aye
Beverly B. McKay	-	Aye
David S. Weiss	-	Aye

3) Citizens Comment Period

No persons appeared to address the Board.

4) Introduction John Hewa President/CEO of Rappahannock Electric Cooperative

Chris Boies introduced John Hewa, the new President/CEO of Rappahannock Electric Cooperative, who became CEO on August 1, 2020.

John Hewa presented the following presentation:



833 distribution and 62 generation & transmission cooperatives

Power **56%** of the nation's landmass.



Own and maintain **42%** (2.6 million miles) of U.S. electric distribution lines.

Serve **88%** of U.S. counties

Generate **5%** of total U.S. electricity

Own **\$183 billion** in assets

Sell **13%** of all U.S. electricity

Power more than **19 million** businesses, homes, schools & farms

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REC QUICK FACTS

- 22 Counties
- 4,000 sq. mi. Territory
- 170,000 Services
- 17,000 Miles of Line
- 10 Accounts per Mile
- \$460M Revenue
- 430 Employees

REC & CLARKE COUNTY

- 5,460 Meters
- 840 Total Line Miles
- Mt. Weather Emergency Operations Center
- Berryville Graphics
- Clarke County Government
- Stuart M Perry Quarry

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Pre-COVID photo



GOVERNANCE & DOCUMENT CENTER

www.myrec.coop

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Pre-COVID photo

LOCAL CONTACTS



Christopher G. Shipe
Chairman
REC Board of Directors
Region II



John D. Hewa
President and CEO
jhewa@myrec.coop



John Arp, P.E.
Vice President, Engineering,
Operations & Power Supply and
Manager, Western Region
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Whitney Watts
Assistant Secretary to the
Board/Executive Assistant
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Jeff Hinson
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S. Kris Sieber
Manager, Member Services
ksieber@myrec.coop



Casey Hollins
Director of Communications
& Public Relations
chollins@myrec.coop

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LOCAL CONTACTS



Christopher G. Shipe
Chairman
REC Board of Directors
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President and CEO
jhewa@myrec.coop



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S. Kris Sieber
Manager, Member Services
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Casey Hollins
Director of Communications
& Public Relations
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- Lobbies closed
- No disconnections
- Payment arrangements
- Remote workforce
- Community support

REC'S COVID-19 RESPONSE

- Operational Impacts
- Member Hardship
- Employee Household

REC's Board voted to distribute \$13 million in Capital Credits in June

RELIABILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS



Major Work-Plan Projects

- **Since 2020/21** - 20 miles of distribution power lines upgraded
 - Increased reliability and resiliency
 - Serve more load
 - Supply alternate sources of power during some outages
- **Substation Switches Installed** – Easily connect a mobile substation to First Energy's transmission line in order to get power back on quickly should a substation outage occur

Pre-COVID photo



RESPONSIVENESS

Local Operations Center – Front Royal Area Servicemen

Decreased outage times

Pre-COVID photo



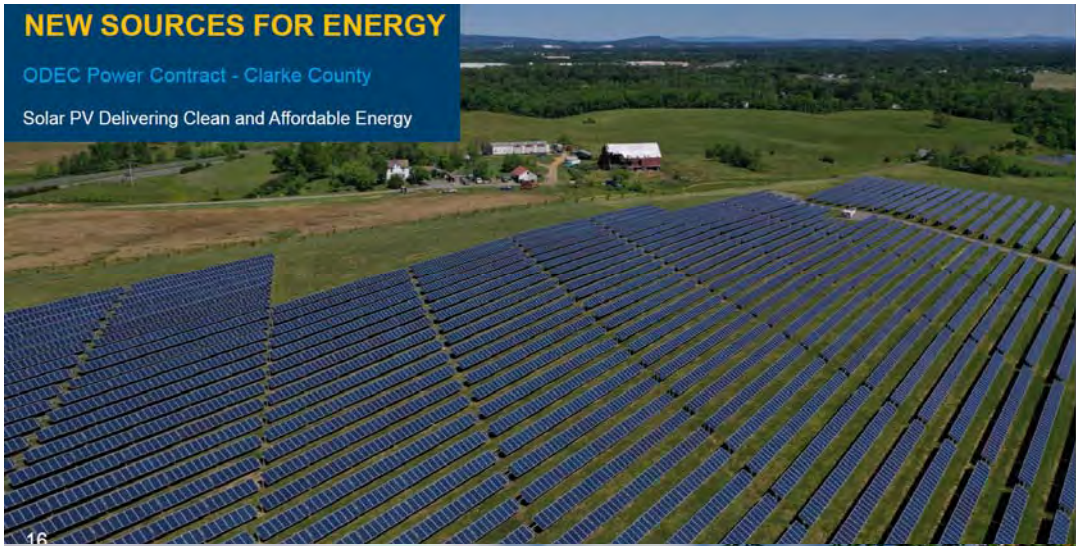


- Hired Economic Development Director
- Conducted regional development study
- ODEC: Stable portfolio & new pass-through rates
- Representation on Boards & Committees
- Developer contact for large commercial accounts

Felicia Ainsa
 Director of Economic
 Development
 fainsa@myrec.coop

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Expanding Member Expectations





REC INITIATIVES



Outage Text Alerts



Energy Use Info



New Website

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CARING & COMMUNITY IMPACT

- 27,000 members enrolled in The Power of Change
- Donations, sponsorships and community grants
- Scholarships & Youth Tour

Since 2019:

- REC's Get Connected event held at neighboring Frederick County Fairgrounds
- Donated thermal underwear to the Winchester Area Temporary Thermal Shelter
- Donated to Shenandoah Area Agency on Aging, Blue Ridge Area Foodbank—Lord Fairfax Branch, and the Winchester Rescue mission
- REC linemen reset Middletown's event pole & assisted a Boy Scout in Eagle Scout project setting flag poles at the Stephens City Moose Lodge



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Help With Housing
Non-profit Agency 540-955-1706

FISH
of
Clarke County
540-955-1823



REC AND FISH
Funding Awards Recipient – Multiple Years
Collaborative Commitment to Community

REC CAREERS



"I feel a deep sense of responsibility and urgency to provide the best service I can to our members every day."

-Ronald Flores
Distribution Design Representative

- Dedicated workforce
- Career Opportunities
- We Hire Local
- Vets Power Us
- myrec.coop/careers

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CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY
REC's Caring Culture
Helping those in Need – pre-COVID photo





Supervisor Lawrence

- Questioned if ten (10) accounts per mile are the same as meters per mile and if Clarke County is less dense than the average. John Hew confirmed those facts.
- Information on broadband; John Hewa stated that they are currently in an FCC quiet period, which will run until the end of January. REC wants to work as a facilitator to leverage our poles, substations, and towers. Called the Boards attention to the significant impact of electric utilities, back in October, REC received a complaint to Federal Court from a property owner in Culpeper County challenging the constitutionality of the Governor and the General Assembly's adopted legislation that was signed into law on January 1, 2020. Added that the challenge raises questions and believe legislation will have to reexamine the law before utilities across the Commonwealth can move forward. This is an issue that needs to be resolved because households and businesses need broadband; iterated that REC will do all possible things to help facilitate, support, and be a part of the solutions. Added that that could be improving infrastructure or working with third-parties but want to help to be able for all to move forward. Explained that many Counties are discussing wireless solutions to assist during this time of the pandemic.
- Asked if REC would work with Shentel giving right-of-ways in order to get their beam technology in the most beneficial areas of the County. John Hewa stated that REC is glad to partner with private companies and leverage the resources of the cooperative.

- Stated that Clarke County has a CTE program at the high school, explained that it would be beneficial for REC to connect and get students involved and learn more about the career. John Hewa expressed that REC would be glad to connect our recruitment individuals with the school CTE program students.
- Glad to have Chris Shipe as Clarke’s representative.

Vice-Chair McKay

- Encouraged REC to have more open board elections in order to get more people to run for those positions. John Hewa explained that REC had 20,600 members vote, which is a 14% turnout on the last election.
- Thanked REC for the wonderful job of modernizing the system so that the power is not out as much. John Hewa stated that REC is investing a great deal into the cooperation and the grid with the use of more technology, but ultimately it is our personnel who have been unbelievably responsive, and their families have been very responsive; when they get called out, it is very rarely a convenient time, it is a tough job, and it is very hazardous, and our team members are very heroic in what they do, and we are very proud of them. Adding that, as a cooperative, our job is to make sure that they have all the tools and resources to do their jobs. Thanked Supervisor McKay for the comments.

Supervisor Bass

- Cost for residential solar on roofs. John Hewa estimated that it is \$2 per watt.

Chris Boies appreciates the partnership as we look at different economic development activities; the County is excited that you have a Director of Economic Development and look forward to working with that person. John Hewa stated that not only do they have an Economic Development Director, but Old Dominion Electric Cooperative (ODEC) took a big step in providing another layer of market pass-through, where we are positioned now with ODEC's new economic development rate. REC can provide an asset-backed portfolio or an ability to provide a direct market pass-through to those who want access to the PJM market. Further explaining that REC is setup and believes that this will be the right formula to be able to talk with clients because they can choose to deal with the market on their own, or we can provide the asset-backed portfolio.

Chair Weiss reiterated broadband is a high priority, so please let us know if we can assist REC in lobbying for the issues because we would like to help our citizens.

John Hewa thanked the Board for all of the comments and assistance with legislators.

5) VDOT

The following update was provided to the Board of Supervisors via email by Ed Carter, Residency Administrator.

Maintenance:

- This past month completed the following work:
 - Shoulders repairs on Route 50 at Route 606
 - Grading cycle on non-hard surface roads
 - Remove hazard trees on Route 617 in Boyce
 - Completed mowing fence to fence on primary Routes
 - Filled potholes, dead animal removal, and storm damage removal on various Routes
- For the month ahead VDOT will continue or start the following work:
 - Brush trimming on route 634 & Route 655 and will then continue to other various Routes
 - Tree Removal on Route 340 and Route 601
 - Storm damage clean up on Route 601
 - Snow removal operations, dead animal removal, pothole filling and storm damage removal as it arises.

Board Items:

- VDOT completed the installation of signs posting the speed limit on Route 606 (River Road) at 45 mph from Route 7 to Route 649 (Frogtown Road) and installed additional warning signs for safety.
- VDOT completed the installation of signs posting the speed limit on Route 655 (Opequon Road) at 45 mph from Route 634 (Salem Church Road) to Frederick County Line.
- VDOT are in the final stages of completing the No Thru Trucks restriction on Route 601 and hope to have this implemented before the end of January.
- VDOT (NOVA & Staunton District) facilitated a kick off meeting on December 4th discussing traffic and pedestrian issues at the Route 7 and Route 601 intersection. Stakeholders from VDOT, Loudoun County, and Clarke County

were in attendance. The meeting started discussions to develop short and long-term solutions for the intersection. As a result, VDOT Staunton and NOVA District planning staff will be partnering to study the intersection by gathering more traffic and pedestrian data entry next year for longer-term solutions. Short-term solution discussions included looking into improving the existing parking areas. We have already scheduled a surveying crew to survey the lots to begin looking at potential expansions. Also NOVA District is exploring the idea of obtaining funding to lengthen the westbound left turn lane on Route 7 in the spring/summer of 2021. Monthly meetings are planned to occur starting in early February.

6) Set 2021 Board of Supervisors' Organizational Meeting Date, Time, and Location.

Staff recommended setting Board of Supervisors' Organizational Meeting for 10 am, Monday, January 11, 2021, Main Meeting Room.

By consensus, the Board set the Organizational meeting at 10 am, Monday, January 11, 2021, in the Main Meeting Room.

7) Approval of Minutes

November 12, 2020, Special Meeting & November 17, 2020, Regular Meeting

Supervisor Lawrence moved to approve the November 12, 2020, Special Meeting, and the November 17, 2020, Regular Meeting minutes as presented. The motion carried by the following vote:

Matthew E. Bass	-	Aye
Terri T. Catlett	-	Aye
Doug M. Lawrence	-	Aye
Beverly B. McKay	-	Aye
David S. Weiss	-	Aye

8) Consent Agenda

Appointment of Jeremy Camp as the Zoning Administrator

Supervisor Catlett moved to adopt the items on the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion carried by the following vote:

Matthew E. Bass - Aye
Terri T. Catlett - Aye
Doug M. Lawrence - Aye
Beverly B. McKay - Aye
David S. Weiss - Aye

9) Capital Improvements Plan

Chris Boies explained that in the packet on page 68, have the recommendation from the Planning Commission a 2021-2026 Capital Improvements Plan (CIP). As discussed in the past, Clarke has not had a CIP in several years, so it was a work in progress in our first year. In future years we hope to incorporate the sanitary district and the school CIP's into the County CIP, so it is in one comprehensive document. One of the biggest learning curves in this process has been to identify our data needs so the best information can be provided to the Board and have better knowledge to make decisions on future CIP's; gave the example that there are request from the Little League for fields and the Soccer League for fields but as a County do not track all of the utilization of the fields so no knowledge on the percentage of the times that the fields are full. With this, it allows us to know what needs to be tracked and analyzed moving forward.

The next five years are show various items for Fire & Rescue; and soccer and baseball fields. Depending in grantsreceive, the overall price may not be fully funded by the County. The Sheriff's Office has typically been budgeted for vehicles every year. With their rotation schedule, their vehicles get high in mileage, they do a good job getting the most out of each vehicle, but it is important for those personnel to have safe and reliable vehicles. There are a number of maintenance items on buildings to be completed. I have met with Joey Braithwaite, Director of Maintenance, to look at all the items and life expectancy of products. At the Joint Building Committee, we have discussed better funding on capital needs to keep the Berryville-Clarke County Government Center up to date - trying to schedule in advance. In the past, the Board has set aside amounts of money from previous years to help allocate funds for projects. It is crucial to think about future projects because, in many cases, it takes that long to save the funds to pay for the project.

The Clarke County Planning Commissions' concern was about the potential pedestrian bridge on VA Route 7, it is not necessarily in conflict with the Comprehensive Plan, but it is not included currently. Therefore, if that project was to be approved, it should become a part of the Comprehensive Plan moving forward. Brandon Stidham, Director of Planning and Zoning, believes that should be included in the Comprehensive Plan; the Board could task the Clarke County Planning Commission to re-evaluate and add that into the Comprehensive Plan in

the different sections, or the Board could approve the CIP Plan with the notation that it needs to be reviewed in the Comprehensive Plan.

Chris Boies emphasized that this is a plan; it is not an approved budget; it does not allocate any funds, nor does it obligate to spend any funds for the listed projects.

Supervisor Catlett asked, and Chris Boies explained that the pedestrian Bridge on VA Route 7 would be a part of the transportation section of the Comprehensive Plan. Supervisor Bass stated that currently, the Comprehensive Plan is undergoing a complete review by the Clarke County Planning Commission, and the transportation section is coming next in the review process, so this is an excellent opportunity to include these projects since we are about to review that section. Chris Boies reiterated that it is not a conflict for the Comprehensive Plan, but it should be included. Supervisor Bass noted that this is a relatively new phenomenon, it has been an issue for years, but all can agree that the addition of the brewery significantly complicated things to the point where it needs to be discussed and addressed.

Supervisor McKay expressed that the pedestrian bridge on VA Route 7 project needs to be written so that it is clear that it will not be paid for by County funds.

Supervisor Lawrence stated that it is good to have the CIP Plan in the documentation.

Chair Weiss complimented the work, reiterating that previously it was done within the budget framework, but this gives us the opportunity to really plan ahead. Emphasized that the money is not being spent from the CIP Plan, this is a list of needs, and then we will plan ways to fund the projects in the long-term.

Supervisor Catlett added that the CIP Plan is a list of potential projects. Just because a project is on the list does not mean that it will happen; it is for discussion and planning.

Vice-Chair McKay stated that with the Health and Human Services, it states a new building; should that be edited to say additional space or new space because they really need space. Chair Weiss agreed with the exception of the Health Department because they need a new building since it is not a tenable five-year building. Vice-Chair McKay made the point that the new building language may preclude new space. Supervisor Bass expressed that as a guideline, does not believe it precludes anything regardless of language but have no problems with

adding new space/building. Supervisor Lawrence explained that “and/or” could be added or replace “new building” with “new space.”

Chair Weiss explained that the best solution would be to write it as “new building and/or new space.”

Supervisor Catlett asked if the gathered data will change the CIP Plan. Chris Boies confirmed that it would change the CIP Plan, adding that this document will be updated every year in the fall in preparation for the upcoming budget year. In the spring, staff will track the field usage, and there could be changes based on the data.

Supervisor Lawrence moved to approve the Capital Improvements Plan as amended. The motion carried by the following vote:

Matthew E. Bass	-	Aye
Terri T. Catlett	-	Aye
Doug M. Lawrence	-	Aye
Beverly B. McKay	-	Aye
David S. Weiss	-	Aye

10) Board of Supervisors Personnel Committee Items

A. Expiration of Term for appointments expiring through February 2021.

2020-12-07 Summary: Following review, the Personnel Committee recommends the following:

- Recommend to the Circuit Court to move Clay Brumback on the Board of Zoning Appeals from the alternative position to the full member position to fill the unexpired term of Charles Kackley, expiring February 12, 2023.
- Reappoint Christian Rousseau to the Family Assessment and Planning Team to a three-year term expiring December 31, 2023.
- Reappoint Roderick ‘Rod’ DeArment to the Clarke County Sanitary Authority to a four-year term expiring January 5, 2025.

2020-12-15 Action: Chris Boies reviewed the Personnel Committee recommendations.

Vice-Chair McKay moved to accept the appointments. The motion carried by the following vote:

Matthew E. Bass - Aye
Terri T. Catlett - Aye
Doug M. Lawrence - Aye
Beverly B. McKay - Aye
David S. Weiss - Aye

B. LEOS study update

2020-12-07 Summary: Following review, the Personnel Committee recommends proceeding with the LEOS Program.

2020-12-15 Action: Chris Boies reviewed the Personnel Committee recommendation and stated that this would be discussed during Finance.

C. Discussion on Clarke County email addresses for appointees

2020-12-07 Summary: After discussion, the Personnel Committee tasked staff with giving new appointees for all Boards, Committees, and Commissions the option of having the county email addresses and add in a disclaimer that if they choose not to have a county email that any business-related emails on their personnel accounts are FOIA-able. Also, inform appointees that if they decide only to use their personnel accounts, they can forward all business-related emails to info@clarkecounty.gov, and County Administration will file per retention.

2020-12-15 Action: Information Only.

11) Board of Supervisors Work Session Items

Board of Supervisors Work Session Agenda
Berryville/Clarke County Government Center, 2nd Floor
101 Chalmers Court, Berryville, Virginia 22611

December 7, 2020, 10:00 AM, Main Meeting Room

Board Members Present: Matthew E. Bass, Terri T. Catlett, Doug M. Lawrence, Beverly B. McKay, David S. Weiss

Board Members Absent: None

Officers / Staff Present: Brenda Bennett, Chris Boies, Jeremy Camp, Cathy Kuehner, Brian Lichty, Sheriff Anthony 'Tony' Roper, Brandon Stidham, Brianna Taylor

Others Present: Leslie Melanson, Nick Sabo

Press Present: Mickey Powell

2020-12-07 Summary: At 10:02 am, Chair Weiss called the meeting to order.

A. Winchester Regional Airport Authority update

Nick Sabo, Executive Director of the Winchester Regional Airport, introduced himself and Leslie Melanson, Winchester Regional Airport Authority Clarke County appointed member.

Nick Sabo presented the Winchester Regional Airport update to the Board

2020-12-15 Action: Information Only.

B. Budget Goals FY2022

The Board discussed the uncertainty associated with the FY2022 budget due to the economic impact of COVID-19. The unknown impact on revenues may necessitate the need for the budget to be approved with a contingency list of expenditures as it did in FY2021. Employee compensation remains a priority, and an updated salary study may be needed to address the issue since the previous study was completed in 2014. The Board also asked for research to be completed on new revenue sources now available to counties (TOT, cigarettes, meals, etc.).

The Board also mentions a potential new building for Social Services and the Health Department. The five-year capital improvements plan was recommended for approval last week by the Planning Commission and will be on the full Board agenda next week. This plan includes the new building as well as other projects reviewed by the Planning Commission.

C. Planning Commission update on short term rentals

The Planning Commission requested feedback from the Board on the revised approach to the draft short-term residential rental text amendment. Brandon

Stidham presented the update to the Board. After discussion, the Board agreed that the proposal was better than the last one and the Board thanked the Planning Commission for their work on this issue.

Chair Weiss left the meeting at 11:15 am.

Brandon Stidham introduced Jeremy Camp, the new Senior Planner/Zoning Administrator.

At 11:16 am, Vice-Chair McKay adjourned the meeting.

2020-12-15 Action: Information Only.

12) Board of Supervisors Finance Committee Items

A. CARES Act Funding Update

2020-12-07 Summary:

- a. Information Only - The Finance Committee reviewed the November 2020 COVID expense summary. The summary report breaks down each of the three CARES Funding sources and related expenses (County, Schools & VA Department of Elections). These expenses are information only as we have approached the 1% limit on budget amendments for FY21, so a public hearing must be held before these items can be appropriated. In addition, several other budget amendment requests have been received, which will need to be part of the public hearing.

2020-12-15 Action: Brenda Bennett reviewed the Finance Committee recommendation to set a public hearing for the expenditures and appropriations. Chris Boies explained that there is a State Code provision that states that if a locality exceeds a budget amendment of 1% of the approved budget, you have to hold a public hearing before the amendments can be approved. Historically Clarke County has looked at this as a cumulative total throughout the year so that several small budget amendments may be done throughout the year, but once it culminates to the 1%, a public hearing has been held. Once the public hearing occurs, if the amendments are approved, we would then start back at zero moving toward that 1% again.

Brenda Bennett explained the following items:

- Clarke County CARES funds - \$1,234,060
- CCPS CARES funds - \$516,347
- Various CCPS grants - \$167,786 (Claude Moore Foundation Grant, School Security Equipment Grant, and other grants.)
- Conservation Easement request - \$569,029 (Smithfield Farm)
- Historic Preservation Commission grant - \$39,427 (Battle of Berryville Boundaries Grant).

Chair Weiss noted on the Conservation Easement request, one of the conservation easement requests is from retiring six (6) DURS. The request is that the County would contribute \$61,827 and the remainder is being donated. For \$61,827 the County is acquiring six (6) DURs and leveraging local dollars.

Supervisor Bass asked, and Chris Boies confirmed the process that all of the money flows through the County, and then we pay it out. Therefore, all have to be appropriated even though the County may only be paying a portion, but because the County receives it and then sends out the check, all of those funds have to be appropriated.

Supervisor Catlett moved to set a public hearing for January 19, 2021, at 6:30 pm, or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard, for appropriations of the following items:

- **Clarke County CARES funds - \$1,234,060**
- **CCPS CARES funds - \$516,347**
- **Various CCPS grants - \$167,786**
- **Conservation Easement request - \$569,029**
- **Historic Preservation Commission grant - \$39,427**

The motion carried by the following vote:

Matthew E. Bass	-	Aye
Terri T. Catlett	-	Aye
Doug M. Lawrence	-	Aye
Beverly B. McKay	-	Aye
David S. Weiss	-	Aye

- b. Information Only - The Finance Committee reviewed a summary of the CARES Act funds and expenses to date, as well as proposed expenses and

needs. It is anticipated that all CARES funds will be expended by the deadline date of December 30, 2020. The summary is attached.

2020-12-15 Action: Brenda Bennett reviewed the summary, which shows the total amount of CARES Act funding that was awarded to Clarke County, what was approved by the Board of Supervisors, spent dollars, and estimated expenditure between now and December 30, 2020. The checks for the payments up to December 30, 2020, has to be written by January 15, 2021.

Supervisor Catlett thanked Brenda Bennet for keeping track of all of these expenditures.

Chair Weiss pointed out that Brenda Bennett started as the Director of Finance in July, in the midst of the pandemic, and has done a marvelous job; the Board is proud of you. Chris Boies declared that Brenda Bennett lead the health care change, which has not been done in twenty (20) years and had only three (3) months to accomplish it all.

B. Fire/EMS items for discussion

2020-12-07 Summary:

- a. John H Enders VFC requests that the previously approved amount of \$2,000 be used to purchase appliances previously designated for a washer/dryer.

2020-12-15 Action: After review,

Supervisor Catlett moved to approve the purchase of appliances, not to exceed the previously approved amount of \$2,000. The amount reimbursed will be for the actual cost of the appliances once a receipt is provided, showing the purchase price. The motion carried by the following vote:

Matthew E. Bass	-	Aye
Terri T. Catlett	-	Aye
Doug M. Lawrence	-	Aye
Beverly B. McKay	-	Aye
David S. Weiss	-	Aye

Chair Weiss commented that this should get spent soon.

- b. Tuition assistance review – For information only. Please a memo from the Fire/EMS/EM Director regarding the use of budgeted funds to partially compensate a volunteer for tuition expenses is included in the packet. The Committee offered no objection to using currently budgeted training funds for this purpose.

2020-12-15 Action: After review,

Supervisor Lawrence explained that it is confusing because the memorandum is for last year’s recipient, not the new one who has already put in roughly 1,700 hours this past year volunteering.

Director Brian Lichty stated that the older memorandums were used so the Board could see the process that was done in past years. Confirmed that it is the exact same request, but it is a new student that is currently attending school.

The Board wanted to recognize and thank the new recipient, MacKenzie Hardesty.

Director Brian Lichty explained that the money had been approved in the FY2021 budget. Adding that the only stipulation was that a process is created, further explained that due to the pandemic that has not been completed yet; therefore, wanted to make sure we followed the same steps from last year. Confirming that the funding was approved and no new money is being requested.

Vice-Chair McKay moved to approve the tuition expenses for the volunteer at John H. Enders. The motion carried by the following vote:

Matthew E. Bass	-	Aye
Terri T. Catlett	-	Aye
Doug M. Lawrence	-	Aye
Beverly B. McKay	-	Aye
David S. Weiss	-	Aye

2020-12-07 Summary:

- c. Blue Ridge staffing update. The Finance Committee reviewed the staffing update of part-time personnel for the Blue Ridge Volunteer Fire Company. While CARES funds can be used through December 30, 2020, the Fire/EMS/EM Director is requesting continued funding beyond the December 30, 2020 date

2020-12-15 Action: Brenda Bennett reviewed the Finance Committee summary adding that the Finance Committee recommends approval of funds to continue providing part-time help at Blue Ridge Volunteer Fire Company after CARES Act funding is no longer available.

Chair Weiss asked Chris Boies and Brian Lichty to give a more in-detail summary.

Chris Boies discussed the financial piece, stating that it is covered because of CARES Act funding. The County was able to reimburse the salaries of Fire & Rescue personnel in the current budget between July 1 and December 30, 2020, for both full-time and part-time employees. The current budget included staff for the entire fiscal year, but it did not budget CARES act revenue to cover those expenses. So, the CARES Act funding that is being used for those expenses between July 1 and December 30, 2020, for all staffing at all the companies is being reimbursed. That reimbursement frees up the funds and allows the Board the opportunity to re-allocate those funds to continue having part-time staff at Blue Ridge. Re-emphasizing that there is no need to add budget because these funds are already in the budget, and it will cover all of the expected expenses for the next six (6) months, extending until June 30, 2021. At the point of June 30, 2021, there is no obligation to continue the staffing, but this was a request from the Blue Ridge Volunteer Fire Company, and the opportunity was available until December 30, 2020. The Board is not obligated to continue the staffing until June 30, 2021, but the funds are available. Director Brian Lichty can explain what the staffing would look like beyond December 30, 2020, and express some of the things that the Blue Ridge Volunteer Fire Company has tried to do in the last few months to increase volunteer recruitment.

Director Brian Lichty discussed the operational piece, explaining that during this time, Fire & Rescues has placed two (2) part-time personnel from 6 am to 6 pm at Blue Ridge Volunteer Fire Company. The goal is to get to seven (7) days a week. Unfortunately, there is a hiring personnel process, so not at seven (7) days a week at this time. All part-time employees who have been hired were given a letter with their conditional offer that this closes December 30, 2020, unless the Board of Supervisors extends the staffing. Explained that no one has been scheduled after December 30, 2020. If approved today, the scheduling will be extended. As far as volunteer recruitment at Blue Ridge Volunteer Fire Company, Fire & Rescue has done a recruitment video and applied for a REC recruitment grant, but was unfortunately denied the grant. Blue Ridge Volunteer Fire Company has done three (3) recruitment events with a fundraising portion on those. Plan to meet in January to continue to address the recruitment efforts for the entire system. Also have used social media to put videos and pictures to

get more information out and get more interest; we plan to continue doing those. At this time, there has been some success with social media use.

Supervisor Lawrence asked if at the Fire & EMS Commission if there would be a new subcommittee on recruitment. Director Brian Lichty explained that no subcommittee would be formed; it would be an operational item, and the discussions would begin in January system-wide.

Vice-Chair McKay expressed that it aches him to fund items with one-time money when people expect it to recur; with this, it helps that it was clear from the start to all new part-time hires that this may not recur. Opining that the Board needs to look where to put tax-payer funds for these employees, do we need them in Blue Ridge Volunteer Fire Company, John H. Enders Volunteer Fire Company, or Boyce Volunteer Fire Company. If we, as the taxpayers, are paying for it, we need to examine it and be able to defend the decision. Chris Boies stated that the point is well received and that it will be a part of the FY2022 budget discussion currently in progress; adding that anything done today will be clearly explained that it ends on June 30, 2021, and anything beyond June 30, 2021, will be in the FY2022 budget. Expressed that as the budget process is discussed this spring, we need to look at that topic closer to figure out the system needs and what can be done to help out the best.

Director Brian Lichty explained that in the past, it was set to staff Blue Ridge Volunteer Fire Company and ended up sending those to John H. Enders Volunteer Fire Company because that is where they were needed. There has been a success, and the system looks at all of the information in detail, taking it all seriously.

Vice-Chair McKay asked, and Director Brian Lichty stated that Boyce Volunteer Fire Company runs a third of the calls that John H. Enders Volunteer Fire Company runs, and Blue Ridge Volunteer Fire Company runs half of what Boyce Volunteer Fire Company runs.

Supervisor Catlett expressed that she is glad that the volunteer recruitment is being looked at, and she hopes there is continued success in that over the next months.

Vice-Chair McKay opined that all skills are needed in Fire & Rescue, and once people understand that there will be more volunteers.

Supervisor Lawrence asked, and Director Brian Lichy confirmed that the report's expenses for September, October, and November include the cost for all employees, including the new part-time hires.

Director Brian Lichy stated that hiring is a slow process because of all of the requirements.

Supervisor Lawrence explained that the main problem with Blue Ridge Volunteer Fire Company is that many of the main volunteers work the same shift, wonder if there was a way to coordinate with the chief and send paid staff there to assist on those days and at those times. Director Brian Lichy explained that it would continuously be worked on and coordinated with the chief. Adding that in the past, Blue Ridge Volunteer Fire Company indicated that there had not been a day that they do not need assistance, it varies depending on the time, unfortunately not all volunteers work the same reoccurring shift week-to-week or month-to-month, so there are times all are off.

Supervisor Lawrence asked if there was any pattern on their schedule; Director Brian Lichy stated that no patterns had been found as of today, but that will be examined continuously.

Supervisor Lawrence conveyed that when John H. Enders Volunteer Fire Company has four paid staff and has many volunteers on a certain day, one of the paid staff should be sent to Blue Ridge Volunteer Fire Company to assist.

Vice-Chair McKay asked, and Director Brian Lichy confirmed that in the report when it states that two (2) calls were run at Blue Ridge Volunteer Fire Company in November, it means that two (2) calls were run when the staff was present. Adding that in December, the report will be higher because there was more staffing there that were able to run those calls, which will be reflected in the report.

Chair Weiss indicated that this is an important issue, and the main question today is whether to fund it for the next six (6) month period.

Supervisor Lawrence asked if it could be funded for a month to see where the part-timers stand in the clearing process to see how many we will have.

Chair Weiss personally stated that staffing is needed at Blue Ridge Volunteer Fire Company; how to satisfy that is a long-term question. At this time, the financial stability is available for the next six (6) months, so I favor providing the service

until June 30, 2021, so Director Brian Lichty can hire and staff personnel for a six (6) month timeframe to see how it works.

Chris Boies expressed that if it is only for one (1) month, it creates staffing and scheduling issues for February because the next Board decision would not be made until the third week of January. Adding that it will get more difficult for the part-time personnel if an accurate timeframe is not given to them.

Vice-Chair McKay specified that he is personally good with staffing for the next six (6) months as long as the part-time personnel knows that it ends June 30, 2021, unless it is voted upon in the upcoming budget process.

Supervisor Lawrence asked if it could be funded for three (3) months to better understand the data. Chris Boies expressed that in that time, the hope is that the budget process will examine the data and figure out the long-term solution. Chris Boies added that there is no hurt in funding until June 30, 2021, because the budget process will be examining during the time and will find out the gap until there are more permanent solutions.

Chair Weiss advised that Director Brian Lichty should have the certainty for the next six (6) months to make it easier on staffing and scheduling instead of having the question if it will continue or not up to June 30, 2021. Adding that there are savings in the current budget that taxpayers provided because of Federal funds; therefore, it is a zero-sum gain monetarily. There is every indication that we will not utilize near the savings that will be generated from those Federal funds; the fund balance is in good shape for this particular year. Personally believe that there needs to be a decision and put this item to rest and then have the budget cycle to take care of the future. Chair Weiss iterated that Blue Ridge Volunteer Fire Company needs to know that the Finance Committee wants a true plan for their company being that they are requesting 24/7 staffing seven (7) days a week. Further discussing that there are many options. Currently, it is two (2) personnel at a time for safety, but in the end, the Board can say that only one person can be afforded.

Vice-Chair McKay put forward that more volunteers are needed at Blue Ridge Volunteer Fire Company, and the Board needs to see some progress.

Supervisor Catlett supports funding until June 30, 2021, because that will give the new hires certainty to have the position for six (6) months and time for Blue Ridge Volunteer Fire Company to work on recruiting more volunteers.

Supervisor Bass moved to approve funds to continue providing part-time help to Blue Ridge Volunteer Fire Company through June 30, 2021. The motion carried by the following vote:

Matthew E. Bass	-	Aye
Terri T. Catlett	-	Aye
Doug M. Lawrence	-	Aye
Beverly B. McKay	-	Aye
David S. Weiss	-	Aye

C. Discuss using the FY21 contingency funds to provide a bonus to employees:

2020-12-07 Summary: A 2% pay increase was included in the FY21 budget for all County and school employees; however, due to the pandemic and the uncertainty of projected revenue, the funds were set aside in a contingency line. If approved, the bonus would be \$1,000 to full time and \$500 to part-time employees that meet the criteria set forth by the County and School Division. The bonus amounts will be processed such that the net amounts (after taxes) will be as close to \$1,000/\$500 as possible

2020-12-15 Action: Brenda Bennett summarized the Finance Committee summary adding that the payroll coordinator worked on getting the net effect to be \$1,000 or \$500 instead of taxes being taken out from each employee from the amount. Chris Boies indicated that the total cost is lower than what was set aside in the contingency.

Supervisor Bass indicated that he supports this and is glad to see this happening especially in the light of all that is happening today. Believe the County and School employees deserve this, and it is well-intended.

Supervisor Lawrence asked if the name be changed from bonus to one-time payment in lieu of raises.

Chair Weiss stated that the Board understands and realizes that there are members of our communities that do not have jobs and who have obviously have not received any pay at all and the Board is sensitive to that, but by the same token, this is money that was budgeted in last year's budget that was put into contingency, from the beginning told employees that if revenue was available that we would try to reward as we could and that is what staff developed, a one-time in lieu of raise payment. Believe the Board owes it to the employees to live up to our word, it does not negatively affect the budget since

it is budgeted in the contingency list and is slightly less than the 2% that was budgeted. Understand that members of the community feel that perhaps the school division in some regards might not deserve that, but the Board wants to work together and treat all of the employees the same and that is what this proposal does. Know that teachers are caring and working hard, but the Board is not unaware of all of the above issues.

Supervisor Catlett moved to release the personnel funds set aside in the FY21 contingency account for the purpose of providing a one-time payment in lieu of raise to County and School Division employees that meet the criteria set forth by the County and school division. The bonus amounts will be \$1,000 for full-time employees and \$500 for part-time employees. The motion carried by the following vote:

Matthew E. Bass	-	Aye
Terri T. Catlett	-	Aye
Doug M. Lawrence	-	Aye
Beverly B. McKay	-	Aye
David S. Weiss	-	Aye

D. LEOS Review and discussion

2020-12-07 Summary: The LEOS review and discussion took place during the Personnel Committee meeting earlier in the day.

2020-12-15 Action: After review, Brenda Bennett explained that the Finance Committee recommends releasing the funds in the amount of \$75,000 previously set aside in the FY21 contingency budget to provide the enhanced hazard duty benefit for full-time firefighters/EMTs.

Chair Weiss reminded the Board that the Personnel Committee believed it was a reasonable benefit because of recruiting and fairness to firefighters/EMT personnel because Clarke's Sheriff Office already is provided the benefit.

Supervisor Lawrence moved to release funds in the amount of \$75,000, previously set aside in the FY21 contingency budget line, to provide enhanced hazard duty benefits for full-time Firefighters/EMTs and approve the resolution provided by the Virginia Retirement System (VRS). The motion carried by the following vote:

Matthew E. Bass	-	Aye
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Terri T. Catlett - Aye
Doug M. Lawrence - Aye
Beverly B. McKay - Aye
David S. Weiss - Aye

Chair Weiss stated that this had been a process, and the Board appreciates all of the hard work from staff and the patience of the full-time firefighters/EMTs.

E. Bills and Claims

2020-12-07 Summary: Following review, the Finance Committee recommends approval of the November 2020 Invoice History Report.

2020-12-15 Action:

Supervisor Catlett moved to approve the November 2020 Invoice History Report. The motion carried by the following vote:

Matthew E. Bass - Aye
Terri T. Catlett - Aye
Doug M. Lawrence - Aye
Beverly B. McKay - Aye
David S. Weiss - Aye

F. Standing Reports

- Year to Date Budget Report
- Reconciliation of Appropriations
- Capital Projects Report

2020-12-15 Action: Information Only.

13) Joint Administrative Services Board

Brenda Bennett highlights include:

- Scheduled to meet on Monday, December 21, 2020.
- The County has come to an agreement with Benefit Plan Administrators (BPA) for medical health insurance; they are a third-party administrator.
- Plan to send out a letter with all of the information and documents to all employees later this week.

- Insurance ID cards should be received by January 1, 2021.
- Cards will have Cigna information since BPA works with Cigna.
- Everyone will be migrated into the new plan.
- Chair Weiss stated that once all is done, there will be an in-depth review of what is happening and how it is different.
- Chris Boies explained that the Joint Administrative Services Board approved, for a six (6) month stop-gap type of measure, to allow in the Spring to develop a plan that would go into effect July 1, 2021. Since there was a quick turnaround, all employees were moved into a similar plan to what is in use now, for the next six (6) months, but then JAS will develop the plans that will go into effect July 1, 2021, and have the normal open-enrollment in May. There is still work to be done, but there are some new and exciting opportunities with this new company that was not previously available.
- Chair Weiss stated that through staff's work, they were able to achieve transitioning employees into similar plans for the first six (6) months. Further explained that the County has a third-party that employees can contact directly and that third-party will contact the insurance company. Indicating that in the end, it has great potential in providing the County with savings, better control, and data. Opined that this will be a good thing.

14) Government Projects Update

Chris Boies provided the monthly project update:

- Monument Committee: The Board approved a committee on November 17, 2020, to study the monument issue. Staff has received input from the Board on guidance to provide to the committee. You have this document in front of you. I have spoken with Chair John Staelin, and he is working on setting up the initial meeting after the holidays.

Chair Weiss stated that the desire of the charge was not to tell the committee exactly what to do on a moment by moment basis but to give it an overall direction, and this document represents that.

By consensus, the Board agreed on the following document.

Monument Committee

The Board of Supervisors appointed a committee on November 17, 2020, to review and provide recommendations for the statue located in front of the Clarke County Circuit Court Courthouse. Research conducted by County staff has revealed that the County is not currently the owner of the statue or the grounds on which it sits. A number of citizens have expressed opinions about the statue, both for and against its potential relocation.

The Committee is tasked with developing a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors on what actions, if any, should be taken concerning the statue. The recommendation should take into account the historical context of the statue, the legal opinion issued by the County Attorney on the ownership issue, and the input from various stakeholder groups in the County. The Board desires a recommendation that has broad community support and will move the community forward in a united manner.

To support the Committee in developing a recommendation, various county staff will be available to provide information, research, and legal resources. The Committee has no budget or spending authority, and requests for any expenditures should be made to the County Administrator. Committee meetings must be conducted in public (unless a closed session is held as specifically allowed by law), and at least three days' notice must be provided to the public for meetings. The County Administrator will assist with all public notices, posting it was late in the game that meeting dates/times on the County website, reserving spaces for the meetings, and all other public notice and Freedom of Information Act items.

- Non-Profit Assistance CARES Funding: As you know, the Board allocated \$100,000 of the CARES fund for a non-profit assistance program. We received twelve (12) requests, totaling almost \$550,000. To get that number down to the \$100,000 allocated, we are proposing to fund requests of \$10,000 and under at 100% and fund the remaining requests at \$10,000, which is the same amount we capped the small business assistance program. That would leave \$4,287, which we propose to divide among the three fire companies so they would receive \$11,429. If the Board agrees, we will begin processing these payments as soon as possible.

Supervisors thanked staff for this and glad that the non-profits were able to receive some of the CARES Act funding.

Supervisor Bass asked for clarification, and Chris Boies confirmed that the CARES Act funding opportunity for non-profit organizations did not come into effect until later. Supervisor Bass added that if we had known earlier on, non-profits could have received more funds. Chris Boies stated that that would be true if there were more funds that have not already been spent for other priorities the Board previously allocated. Believe the \$10,000 cap is consistent with the small business assistance program, so the County is not placing more value on one program over another.

By consensus, the Board agreed to move forward with the non-profit assistance CARES funding.

- We have an update from the National Weather Service at 2:30 today on the impending snowstorm. Director Brian Lichty is currently on that call, and the latest forecast is that it will be a wet snow accumulating 12-18 inches, but the wind will be low, so not expecting the snow to drift. Will keep an eye on the storm because it has the potential to impact the power system. County employees have been preparing equipment. The event will likely impact our operations if the larger amounts of predicted snow come true.

Chair Weiss stated that is citizens do not need to be out tomorrow during the storm to please stay home.

- This evening we have two public hearings. We have 260 comments submitted for tonight and a number of people who have let us know they will be attending. We will do our best to make sure everyone can speak in a safe manner. If there are many people in attendance, we will fill this room, then overflow will be in the atrium upstairs, then overflow from that will be in the atrium downstairs, and if there is overflow from that area, there will be a sign-up sheet for people to sign up and stay in their vehicles to be called when it is there time to speak. County Administration has been encouraging people to submit their comments ahead of time to be heard, hope that there is not a huge crowd tonight. Everyone has the right to speak and the right to see the meeting, either in person or live-stream. Preparing for anything for this evening.

Chair Weiss reminded all Supervisors that per the Board of Supervisors Rules of Procedures, the meeting could be stopped at 10:00 pm, adding that personally, his goal is to have all present citizens to speak, have some from the comments that were sent in to be read, and all comments will be in the written December 15, 2020, minutes record.

- Thanked the Board of Supervisors for having perfect attendance at all Board meetings, reviewing and knowing information prior to each meeting, and having questions prepared. Thank the Board of Supervisors for their leadership.
- Thank the staff for working hard this year and finding different ways to get the work done for citizens in ways that have not been done in the past. There has been continued service throughout the pandemic, looks forward to the vaccine and being able to get back to business as normal, and having some of the practices that have been found effective to continue on, but looks forward to having citizens back in the building and hope that this will occur in early 2021, will work through that as the vaccine is available. Thank all employees because they have all done a tremendous job; glad that funds were allocated today to help those employees.

15) Miscellaneous Items

None added to the December 15 meeting.

16) Summary of Required Action

<u>Item</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>
1.	Process approved minutes for November 12, 2020, & November 17, 2020, Regular Meeting Minutes.	Brianna R. Taylor
2.	Place 2021 Board of Supervisors' Organizational Meeting on calendars	Cathy Kuehner
3.	Execute notice of appointment	David S. Weiss
4.	Process appointments and update the database.	Brianna R. Taylor
5.	Proceed with LEOS Program	Brenda Bennett & Chris Boies

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|-----|--|---|
| 6. | Execute & Process VRS Hazardous Duty Benefit Resolution | David S. Weiss,
Chris Boies, &
Brian Lichty |
| 7. | Capital improvements Plan | Chris Boies |
| 8. | Develop Public Hearing Notice PH-2021-01 | Brenda Bennett
& Chris Boies |
| 9. | Advertise Public Hearing Notice PH-2021-01 | Brianna R Taylor |
| 10. | Fire/EMS Items: appliances John H. Enders, Part-time continuation Blue Ridge | Brenda Bennett |
| 11. | Contingency List one-time pay | Brenda Bennett |
| 12. | Bills and Claims. | Brenda Bennett |
| 13. | Send Monument Committee document to Chair John Staelin | Chris Boies |
| 14. | Process non-profit grants | Tiffany Kemp |

17) Board Member Committee Status Reports

Supervisor Matthew E. Bass

Board of Septic and Well Appeals

- Did not meet.

Clarke County Library Advisory Council

- Zoom Meeting.
- Saw an uptick in the October and November membership.

Planning Commission

- Recommended the adoption of the Capital Improvement Plan.
- Continued the discussion in short term rentals.

Sheriff Office

- Did not meet but would like to wish a happy birthday to Travis Sumption.

Josephine School Community Museum Board

- Still have not met.

Legislative Updates – High Growth Coalition

- Law comes into effect January 1, 2021, dealing with balance billing; which deals with health insurance and in particular those persons who may have to go out-of-network from time-to-time.
- Effective January 1, 2021, it will be a primary offense to have your cell phone in your hand while driving. Encourage all to not hold your cell phone while driving vehicles.

Northwestern Regional Juvenile Detention Center Commission

- Meets this Thursday.

Northwest Regional Adult Drug Treatment Court Advisory Committee

- Hope to have the results of the study in January.

Town of Berryville

- Renewed their lease with Berryville Main Street.
- Acquired five acres from the Clarke County Ruritans.

Supervisor Terri T. Catlett

CPMT

- Meets next week.

Clarke County Humane Foundation

- Meeting tomorrow via ZOOM.
- Cat lost since 2016 that was found via microchip.

Conservation Easement Authority

- Meets this week.

Parks & Recreation Advisory Board

- Has not met.

Clarke County Historic Preservation Commission

- Trying to figure out what to do with neglect buildings.

School Board

- Met last night, VFW came and presented awards to teachers.; the English teacher at D.G. Cooley received an award, C.J. Wilkerson; a 2009 graduate; received the middle school award for band, and Mark Curry for high school band received an award.

- Discussed operating carryover to bring to Finance Committee.
- Discussed sports to address COVID-19.

Supervisor Doug M. Lawrence

Board of Social Services

- Hope to have a new Director tomorrow.

Broadband Implementation Committee

- Question of the constitutionality of the State law that allows broadband to be ran in the right of ways. State Attorney General is getting involved. Rappahannock electric Cooperative was late in the game in providing fiber to the home on the basis that other electric cooperatives are doing that. Pulled out of the auction because of the fear that it may take a few years to go to the Supreme Court. The auction that they were in was to provide fiber to every meter within the next seven (7) years, so it is disappointing, but the committee is hopeful that at the January meeting we can get a few companies together and move things forward.

Vice-Chair Bev B. McKay

Joint Building Committee

- Completing the relocation of the drop-boxes.

Clarke County Sanitary Authority

- Still working on meters.

Chairman David S. Weiss

- Nothing to report on at this time.

18) & 19) & 20) Closed Session pursuant to §2.2-3711-A1 Specific Employees or appointees of the Board. Closed Session pursuant to §2.2-3711-A5 Discussion concerning a prospective business or industry or the expansion of an existing business or industry where no previous announcement has been made of the business' or industry's interest in locating or expanding its facilities in the community. Closed Session pursuant to §2.2-3711-A8 Consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by a public body regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel.

At 3:13 pm, **Supervisor Bass moved to enter closed session pursuant to §2.2-3711-A1 Specific Employees or appointees of the Board, §2.2-3711-A5**

Discussion concerning a prospective business or industry or the expansion of an existing business or industry where no previous announcement has been made of the business' or industry's interest in locating or expanding its facilities in the community, and §2.2-3711-A8 Consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by a public body regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel. The motion carried by the following vote:

Matthew E. Bass	-	Aye
Terri T. Catlett		Aye
Doug M. Lawrence	-	Aye
Beverly B. McKay	-	Aye
David S. Weiss	-	Aye

Brandon Stidham, Director of Planning and Zoning, was invited to attend the Closed Session.

At 4:23 pm, The members of the Board of Supervisors being assembled within the designated meeting place, with open doors and in the presence of members of the public and/or the media desiring to attend, Supervisor Bass moved to; reconvene in open session. The motion carried as follows:

Matthew E. Bass	-	Aye
Terri T. Catlett		Aye
Doug M. Lawrence	-	Aye
Beverly B. McKay	-	Aye
David S. Weiss	-	Aye

Supervisor Bass further moved to execute the following Certification of Closed Session:

CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED SESSION

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors of the County of Clarke, Virginia, has convened a closed meeting on the date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

WHEREAS, Section 2.2-3700 of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Clarke, Virginia that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Supervisors of the County of Clarke, Virginia, hereby certifies that, to the best of each members knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which the certification resolution applies, and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed or considered by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Clarke, Virginia. The motion was approved by the following roll-call vote:

Matthew E. Bass	-	Aye
Terri T. Catlett	-.	Aye
Doug M. Lawrence	-	Aye
Beverly B. McKay	-	Aye
David S. Weiss	-	Aye

At 4:24 pm, Chair Weiss recessed the meeting.

At 6:31 pm, chair Weiss reconvened the meeting.

Chair Weiss welcomed all citizens who were present and watching on the live-stream. Explained that there are two (2) Public Hearings, reminding all that in a public hearing, citizens are speaking to the Board of Supervisors, so please direct all comments to the Board, adding that there is a three (3) minute time-limit on the comments. With the second public hearing, there are many who are present who wish to speak and many comments that were received by staff, expressing that all of the comments may not be read during the meeting, but all comments will be included in the written record. Further explained that Board members are able to ask questions for clarification, but that is not up for a debate.

21) Citizen's Comment Period

No persons appeared to address the Board.

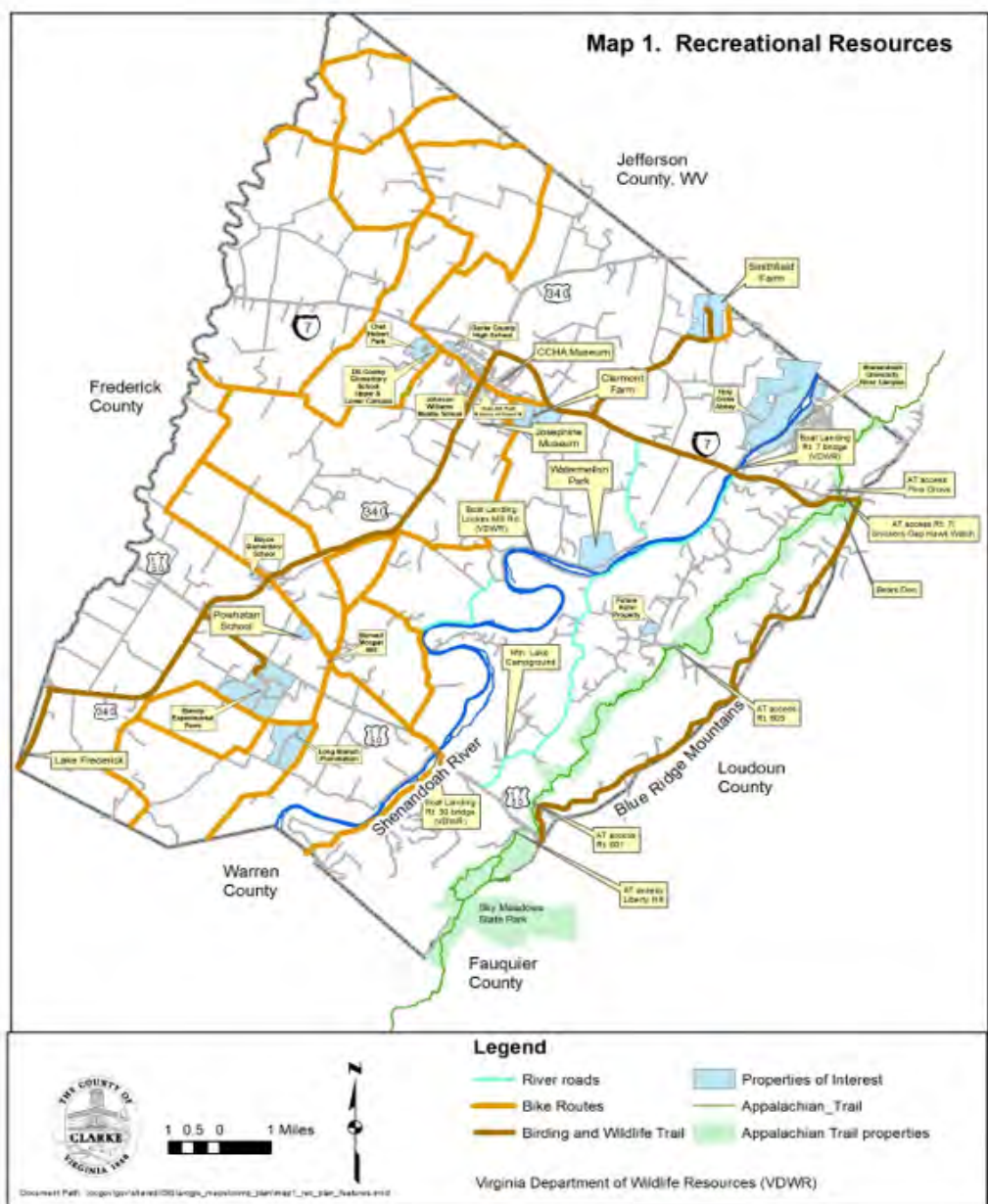
22) PH2020-05: Recreation Component Plan

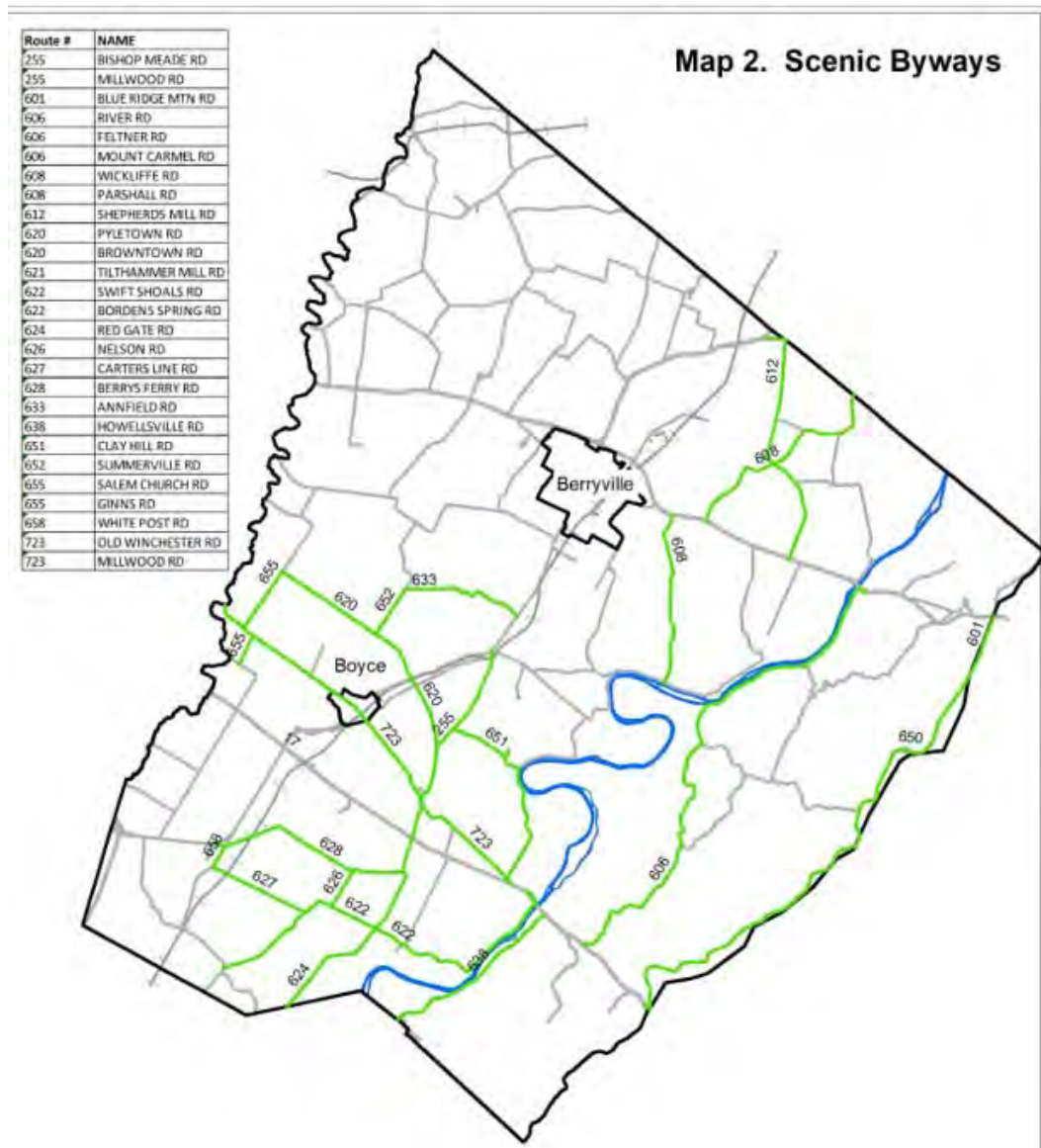
Alison Teetor, Natural Resource Planner; presented a PowerPoint presentation with the following points:

Recreation Component Plan

- Thanked the Comprehensive Plan Committee: Bob Glover, Doug Kruhm, Matthew Bass, Anne Caldwell, and George Ohrstrom.
- Purpose: To address the recreational needs of the community, how they will be protected and promoted.
- Goals:
 - Meet the recreation needs of the community.
 - Increase awareness of all recreational activities.
 - Assist in maximizing the recreation value of existing assets.
 - Promote connectivity among the County’s active and passive recreation resources.
 - Update the Recreation Plan on a 5-year cycle.
- Strategies:
 - Conduct periodic needs assessments.
 - Develop and update Master Plans.
 - Support Parks & Recreation Advisory Board.
 - Encourage partnerships with non-county and private recreation facilities.
- Define Recreation:
 - Active Recreation – involves organized activities that require infrastructures such as playgrounds and ballfields.
 - Passive Recreation – “low-intensity recreation” emphasized the open-space aspect of a park and allows for the preservation of natural habitat.
 - Adjacent facilities – Lake Frederick, Sky Meadows State Park.
 - Special uses
 - Historic resources, museums, Barns of Rose Hill
 - Bicycling Routes
 - Holy Cross Abbey
 - Driving tours
- Modifications:
 - Page 7 – added partnerships with Federal, State, and non-profit agencies.
 - Page 8 – added information about Appalachian Trail Hike Brochure and parking lot expansion efforts.
 - Page 12-13 – highlighted individual Passive Recreation sites to be consistent with the Special Use format.
 - Page 13 – revised the description of Long Branch.
 - Page 14 – added Locke’s Mill.

- o Page 16 – added section on Scenic Byways including a map detailing designated roads.
- o Page 17 – added references to the Hawk Watch Sign that was installed in 2018.
- o Page 18 – revised Watermelon Park description.
- o Page 19 – removed reference to the Family Campground as it is similar to other river lots that are rented privately.
- o Page 19 – revised the description of the Mountain Lake Campground after validating it is still operational.





- Conclusion Key Points:
 - o Address existing and potential recreational needs of the community.
 - o Strategies to protect, promote, grow, and enhance active and passive resources.
 - o Work with private partners.
 - o Support Parks & Recreation Advisory Board.

At 6:41 pm, Chairman Weiss opened the public hearing.

Supervisor Bass thanked Alison Teetor, staff, and Clarke County Planning Commission members who worked on this plan. Explaining that the Clarke County Planning Commission is doing a complete review of the Comprehensive Plan and going through all of the plans, and making edits.

Supervisor Lawrence read parts Section III Part 3b. to emphasize that is what will be analyzed during the next public hearing, PH2020-06. The Clarke County Planning Commission has thought about these items, and the Board needs to respect them.

The following citizen sent in their comment via email to County Administration, who read the following verbatim into the record.

Robina Rich Bouffault, Boyce

- I have reviewed the proposed updates to the current Recreation Component Plan, and think that the adjustments made are very appropriate.
- Separating the recreational resources and the scenic bylaws into two maps instead of only one map is also a big improvement over the existing plan.
- I fully support the approval of this revised component plan.

At 6:42 pm, Chair Weiss closed the Public Hearing.

Supervisor Bass moved to approve the Recreation Component Plan as presented. The motion carried by the following vote:

Matthew E. Bass	-	Aye
Terri T. Catlett	-	Aye
Doug M. Lawrence	-	Aye
Beverly B. McKay	-	Aye
David S. Weiss	-	Aye

23) PH2020-06: Watermelon Pickers Fest, River & Roots Festival, Single-day Special Event

The applicant, Trevor Creany, co-owner of Shepherds Ford Production; came to the podium with the following statements:

- Thanked the Board of Supervisors and County Administration.
- Personally was born and raised in Clarke County and a proud graduate of Clarke County High School class of 2008.

- Shepherds Ford Productions was founded in Clarke County and has operated for more than two decades. It is composed of four owners who all have long-standing ties to the Clarke County community and a proven track record for producing events that boost economic development as well as stewardship of the Shenandoah River.
- Here today to inform the public of the intentions and ultimately ask the Board for approval for the permit to solidify Shepherds Ford Productions to host Watermelon Pickers Fest, River & Roots Festival, and limited single-day event at the property located at 1352 Tilthammer Mill Road Boyce, Virginia 22620.
- Background of what Shepherds Ford Productions is applying for; Watermelon Pickers Fest is the largest of the events, with a maximum attendance of 3,500 attendees, and is scheduled for September 2021.
- In the past, at Watermelon Park, the 16th annual Watermelon Park Fest in 2018 sold out with 2,000-weekend camping tickets and 1,000 single-day tickets. The campers stayed for all three (3) days.
- River & Roots has not occurred for a few years, hopes that it will eventually bring in 1,500 to 2,000 attendees; however, the attendance in June 2021 will likely be low because of COVID-19, or it may not even happen.
- Both festivals have similar schedules for their respective weeks, allow camping on Tuesday and Wednesday, then live music, workshops, and vendors are offered on Friday and Saturday. Attendees are allowed to camp on Saturday but must leave on Sunday.
- The music begins in the afternoon on Thursday and is shut down by midnight to follow the County noise ordinance.
- Notified and received approval from the County departments, including the Building Department, Clarke County Sheriff’s Office, Fire & EMS, State Police, Health Department, and VDOT.
- Know that there are some contingencies involved and will answer any questions.
- Believe that Shepherds Ford Productions has adequately addressed all aspects of the permit that have been brought to our attention thus far.
- Aware that there is opposition for this permit, would like to state that for the record that Shepherds Ford Productions is not applying for a special use permit for a yearlong campground or rezoning of the property at 1352

Tilthammer Mill Road Boyce, Virginia 22620; only applying to temporarily events.

- Highlighted the temporary nature of these proposed events:
 - Events do not require a single building permit for any permanent structure, let alone rezoning.
 - The stages, vendors, event areas, restrooms, and box office are all 100% mobile and temporary.
 - Designed the events this way to be able to leave no trace; this leaves the property spotless for fifty (50) weeks out of the year so that it can be used for cattle and hay operations.
 - Provides the property owner with a way of earning revenue on the investment without requiring any additional changes to the property.
 - There are several DURs available, and personally guarantee construction and housing would be a much bigger issue for the County; and ultimately, the investment needs to generate revenue, and a couple of temporary events seems like a win-win.
- Highlighted that the property was chosen for these reasons:
 - Believe it is the best place in Clarke County to hold these events.
 - Heard that there are plenty of fields in Clarke County, this is not the right location to hold the events or hold it at the fairgrounds.
 - Assure you that the decision was not made lightly; as I said before, Shepherds Ford Productions has been operating in Clarke County for almost two (2) decades. There are not many properties in the County that check all of our required boxes.
 - First, this property is absolutely beautiful, has a connection to this County, and tries to make it a better place to live while showing the natural beauty.
 - Part of the reason that Watermelon Park Fest grew into a successful event is that people wanted to leave the cities and towns that they live in to experience both national and GRAMMY award-winning music at a beautiful setting also preferable beside the Shenandoah River.
 - A chance to unwind and be on vacation in nature while listening to world-class music with friends and family.
 - This is the biggest reason why people keep coming back and bringing their families.

- In addition to the beauty, the size of the property has much more flexibility.
 - For 2021 we cannot assume that we will be able to pack people into the area like was done at Watermelon Park, nor does Shepherds Ford Productions want to.
 - Watermelon Park Fest utilized a 27-acre campground and 250+ additional acres available.
 - Shepherds Ford Production can assure that the event will not need to be canceled due to social distancing requirements.
 - Had to cancel the event in 2020, this event and Shepherds Ford Productions will not survive another cancellation.
 - The owner has expressed interest in conservation easement and continuing the agricultural business on the property. Currently, there are 150 head of cattle, and the events will not disturb them or other farm operations.
 - Not advocating for a full-time campground that has been an accusation.
- This permit would do a great service to all of the parties involved.
 - Would have an event that does not only assist economic development and tourism, but it is run by a local company with a track record that can be trusted.
 - The adjoining property owners will enjoy the beautiful view 50 weeks out of the year, knowing that two weeks of events will help keep houses being built across the river, preserving the beautiful views for years to come.
 - The property can lease his land for two weeks in order to earn some revenue on the multi-million-dollar investment.
 - Believe Shepherds Ford Productions have adequately addressed all aspects of the permit and ask for the Board of Supervisors approval.
 - Thank you for your time; please let me know if there are any questions.

Supervisor Bass conveyed that he did have the opportunity to go drive around the area of the proposed event location, was not able to get the entire tour of the property. One thing that was noticed was both electric and barbwire fencing by the river; asked if that would be taken out or how will Shepherds Ford Productions deal with that. Trevor Creany stated that Shepherds Ford Productions is not asking the property owner to do anything to the property, has not asked for the removal of that fencing along the river. When the time for the events, if the fence is not

there, Shepherds Ford Productions will put up barriers to limit access to the river so people cannot just walk in from any point along the riverbank. The barriers would be temporary fencing, either plastic or chain-linked, for the entire stretch of the river. Trevor Creany further explained that the proposal is to allow campers to arrive on Tuesday, so all barriers and signage would be placed on Monday prior to the events.

Supervisor Bass asked what efforts will be taken to keep people out of the river beside the barriers. Trevor Creany explained that there would be signage; if there are concerns throughout the event, there will be announcements through the stage area speakers.

Supervisor Bass questioned, and Trevor Creany confirmed that river access would not be prevented; it will be limited to laid-out entrance areas but not completely prevented. Adding that those access points will need to be determined at this time. Supervisor Bass expressed that he was just concerned because he has children and would not want them to fall down a steep bank with a chance to go in the river.

Supervisor Bass asked, and Trevor Creany confirmed that a site visit was done along the river via driving, there are a couple of cut-ins, but at this time, nothing has been proposed on the river access points. Shepherds Ford Productions will use what is there and go with what is safe; no land or the banks will be destroyed.

Supervisor Bass asked from a manpower standpoint if there were capabilities to have the open river access points to have personnel at those locations. Trevor Creany explained that there are full-time security and medical staff on-site, around the clock.

At 6:55 pm, Chairman Weiss opened the public hearing.

The following citizens presented their comments in person during the Public Hearing:

Jim Klenkar, Boyce

- Clarke County Board of Supervisors, I am planning to attend the meeting, but am also writing to oppose the Application of Shepherds Ford Productions regarding 1352 Tilthammer Mill Road. My wife and I live at 1150 Tilthammer Mill Road, next to the proposed venue, and we also own a 250-acre farm across the road from our home. I oppose the Application for the following reasons:

- The Applicant writes that a letter dated October 9, 2020, a copy of which was included with the Application, was mailed to me. I received no such letter.
- The Application is misleading. The Applicant claims that this is a one-day event, but it is actually an application for separate multi-day events each year for three years, PLUS additional single-day events, the number of which is "to be determined," with up to 3,500 persons each day for each of these events, over those same three years. It appears that at least one of the events is actually a five-day event, with five days of camping and three days of musical performances from noon until midnight. The Applicant has not submitted to-scale drawings, and there is not sufficient daily parking for the number of vehicles that can be reasonably anticipated to arrive each day. There is no indication wherein the flood plain area of the site the 50 portable toilets (using the Applicant's calculations of one toilet per 75 people and 3,750 people) will be located. Most significantly, the Applicant states that this event has been approved by the Board previously. That is not true. This event has never been held at, approved for, or even proposed for, this location.
- The proposed event(s) will create unsafe traffic conditions, including obstruction of traffic on Tilthammer Mill Road, Route 723, Route 50, and Route 340. The Applicant states that there will be as many as 3,500 attendees (in addition to staff and performers) on each day of some of the events. If one conservatively assumes three persons per vehicle, that translates to more than 1,000 vehicles trying to enter the venue via a single lane driveway at the base of a steep hill on Tilthammer Mill Road. If each car is about twenty feet long, that is more than 20,000 linear feet - about FOUR MILES - of traffic. It will actually be more because, of course, there will also be people leaving and entering the site during the day, as well as other traffic on the road, including the garbage trucks the Applicant says will be hauling trash on a daily basis from the event, and trucks hauling the portable toilets (unless the Applicant intends that campers camping five days will be using the same unemptied portable toilets). In the case of a sellout, there will be even more people waiting to get in, and some will have to turn their cars around on this narrow road. When the music ends each evening at midnight, all of the attendees will be exiting onto Tilthammer Mill Road at the same time in the early morning hours.

Although I suspect that more than a few of the drivers will have consumed alcohol at this event, where alcohol will be sold and can be brought in by campers, there is no obvious place for an alcohol check-point to be set up.

- The traffic obstruction will not be limited to Tilthammer Mill Road. It will also occur on Route 340 and on Route 50. Specifically, anyone attending the event from the north will be directed south on Route 340 from Berryville until they are directed to make a left turn onto Route 255 at Old Chapel. Traffic will back up on the single southbound lane of Route 340 as cars have to wait to make a left-hand turn in front of northbound traffic traveling 55 mph on Route 340.
- Similarly, attendees traveling from the south or southwest will be directed to travel east on Route 50, where they will be forced to make a left hand turn onto Rt 723 in front of oncoming westbound Route 50 traffic traveling at 55 mph. Traffic is sure to back up on eastbound Route 50 as people wait to make this left-hand turn.
- In short, Tilthammer Mill Road will be a multi-mile parking lot as people are required to wait on that road to enter the venue, and there will be significant backups on Route 340 and Route 50 as people wait to make left-hand turns in front of oncoming traffic. The Applicant has attached a letter from VDOT indicating that VDOT has no objection, "PROVIDED NOTHING IMPEDES THROUGH TRAFFIC OR CREATES A BACKUP ONTO ROUTE 621 [i.e., Tilthammer Mill Road]". There absolutely will be impediments to through traffic and a backup onto Tilthammer Mill Road. VDOT's letter hardly constitutes approval of this Application.
- In addition to the dangerous traffic conditions, the multiple proposed events are certain to cause significant damage to the banks of the Shenandoah River and to the river itself. The proposed camping area runs right along the Shenandoah River, and there is no fencing or anything else to keep the thousands of attendees from entering the Shenandoah River along those unprotected banks. The fencing that was previously in place along the river bank has been removed. Brush and vegetation between that fencing and the river that served to reduce silt runoff into the river also has been removed. What remains is an unprotected river bank. Thousands of persons will use those unprotected banks to enter and exit the river- particularly on hot summer days - thereby damaging the banks and sending silt into the river. Virginia has a policy of trying to protect its

rivers, which is why funds are available to help farmers pay to fence their livestock away from rivers and to keep riparian buffer zones to protect our rivers. My wife and I have participated in those programs to protect the part of Burwell/Spout Run that runs through our farm into the Shenandoah River. The Applicant's proposal, at this location, is absolutely contrary to the policies of river protection adopted by Virginia and Clarke County. It is naive to think that, especially during the hot summer days, there will not be thousands of persons going up and down those unprotected banks to swim, bath (given that there are no shower facilities for persons who may be camping five days), and given the limited number of portable toilets, urinating and/or worse, in the river.

- A related concern: Thousands of people gathered together over multiple days in the flood plain along the Shenandoah River will also lead to lots of trash making its way into the river. It is ridiculous to assume otherwise. It is also ridiculous to assume that none of the campers and other persons bringing hundreds of portable generators to the site will not spill gasoline onto this flood plain area bordering the river.
- The promoter who submitted this Application has other options. There is at least one venue for this event that has none of these problems: the Clarke County Fairgrounds in Berryville. That venue has access, parking, water, electricity, etc. That venue is safe, is not in a flood plain, does not create the traffic safety issues addressed above, and will not cause any damage to the Shenandoah River or its banks.
- For each of the foregoing reasons, I respectfully request that the Application be denied.

Chair Weiss informed all citizens that he was sorry to forget to communicate that there has been new information from VDOT that was received this evening at 3:19 pm from Ed Carter, Residency Administrator. He then read the letter as follows; “Bobby thought the applications was for Watermelon Park and responded accordingly, VDOT is going to have to withdraw the permit response until we can review the new location. Sorry for the confusion VDOT will look at this once the storm is over.”

Belinda Burwell, Boyce

- Clarke County Board of Supervisors, I would like to express my opposition to Shepherds Ford Productions' Application to hold the Watermelon Pickers Fest, the River, and Roots Festival, along with additional single-day events at 1352 Tilthammer Mill Road in Boyce.
- I have the following objections to their application and these events:
 - In their application, they claim to have mailed notification of this special event application to the neighbors of this property on October 9. We live at 1150 Tilthammer Mill Road, a property that adjoins the festival site, and we did not receive any notification. In addition, we do not know of any neighbors who received the notification they claim to have mailed. I learned about this festival application on December 5th from John Staelin.
 - The first page of the application is misleading as the name implies this is a Single Day Event TBD. The attached Event Plan lists two separate 3-day events with five days of camping, in June and again in September, and also asks for an undefined number of TBD (to be determined) Single Day Events. The number of attendees expected at these events will be 2,000 to 3,500. On event days, approximately 1,000 to 1,500 vehicles will need to access this venue from Tilthammer Mill Road. This venue has a single one-lane farm entrance threaded between Spout Run and the steep edge of Vineyard Hill.
 - Arriving vehicles will back up for distances estimated to be 2 to 5 miles, creating hazardous backups on the many blind curves and hills along this narrow road. We believe this many vehicles attempting to attend events of this size will create a dangerous situation on our road and restrict our ability to access and care for our livestock and the rescued wildlife on our farm. Our farm is on both sides of Tilthammer Mill Road, with houses, garages, and wildlife cages on 18 acres on the east side of the road and 250 acres of pastures, woods, livestock, a barn, and wildlife cages on the west side of the road. The animals on our farm include cattle, horses, and injured native wildlife, including bald eagles, red and gray foxes, owls, and a variety of other wild species. Injured and sick rescued wild animals are dropped off and picked up here daily, and this festival traffic could prevent rescuers access to our farm on festival days. We are also concerned we may not be able to leave the farm to get needed supplies during these festivals.

- During these events, loudspeakers will be broadcasting music and voices from 12 noon until 12 midnight next to our home. Wildlife, including bald eagles and owls, are very sensitive to noise. Voices and the sounds of people create fear and stress in wild animals and cause them to try to flee the area. When confined to a cage, they will try to run or fly into the walls of the cage, injuring themselves. Our success with saving injured and sick wildlife has been credited to the quiet, low-stress environment here, and the noise created by this festival could cause the death of many of these wild animals. This past June, we had two recovering bald eagles in our flight cage, which is just up the hill from the proposed music stage. I do not believe these eagles could have survived three days of 12 hours of loud noise from which they cannot escape. Every year in June, we are releasing orphan red foxes we have rescued and raised (all wild foxes are born in March and are learning to hunt in June). They are released from their outdoor den cages to explore our 250-acre farm and learn where to find and how to catch food. A backup food supply is still offered in their home den cage during this critical time, but I fear the noise and disturbance of this festival will cause them to flee the area before they are able to survive on their own.
- The bank of the Shenandoah River at 1352 Tilthammer Mill Road is at risk of erosion now that the new owner has removed the fencing and underbrush of the riparian buffer zone along the river bank to make it easier for guests to access the river. Riparian buffer plants are necessary to prevent run-off erosion of that steep bank. Opening the bank up for thousands of people to climb down into the river will create run-off pollution that will endanger the whole river ecosystem. Litter from these festivals will wash into the river as well.
- Shepherds Ford Productions, after terminating its relationship with Watermelon Park, had planned to hold these large music festivals at the Clarke County Fairgrounds. That site is much better suited for this kind of event. The roads leading to the fairgrounds are designed to handle large numbers of vehicles, and the fairgrounds have the facilities to accommodate large crowds of people. That would be a much safer venue for the attendees of these festivals and for the residents of Clarke County. Keeping events of this size in that area will preserve the beautiful natural habitats Clarke County has worked so hard to protect.

Supervisor Catlett asked, and Belinda Burwell answered that the wildlife center serves all animals coming from all over northern Virginia, West Virginia, and Maryland, all the way down to Woodbridge, and west of Bunker Hill; up past Berkeley Springs; and from Warrenton and Culpepper.

Supervisor Catlett asked, and Belinda Burwell confirmed that the wildlife center for this area has been taking care of wildlife for 15-16 years.

Cuno Anderson, Boyce

- Along with other Tilthammer Mill residents, I only learned the existence of this application at the end of the first week of December and have since been able to review the application in detail. I plan to attend the meeting scheduled for December 15, 2020, but I'm also writing in **opposition** of the application to have the Watermelon Pickers Festival and other similar events at the property of 1352 Tilthammer Mill Road, Boyce, Virginia.
- I've been a resident of the community since 2016; I've lived and worked in the Northern Piedmont and Shenandoah Valley area for the past 33 years. Once I retired from a lengthy law enforcement career, my wife and I decided to settle in Clarke County and were extremely fortunate enough to find our small piece of property which met our needs of peace, tranquility. That was found nestled between conservation easements, mountain views, and the Shenandoah River, all of which Clarke County is known for and very unlike any other county in the Northern Virginia area.
- Tilthammer Mill Road can be best described as an unposted narrow and winding roadway with a number of curves and hills that have limited visibility for oncoming traffic. It's been designated as a scenic byway by the Commonwealth Transportation Board and is well known and frequently used as a route for many motorcycles, car clubs, and cycling enthusiasts. In the summertime, weekend vehicle traffic increases due to river users and gear being transported to drop off/pick up points nearby and in the fall it's the leaf watchers. Still, that being said, vehicular traffic normally slows to a crawl as the sun goes down. All that will dramatically change if this permit is approved.
- There are a number of concerns that should be considered and need to be addressed regarding this application.
 - The farm entrance is located near the bottom of a long steep hill and is only accessed by using Tilthammer Mill or Clay Hill Roads which are both

similar in design, use and description. Neither roadway has adequate shoulder space which impedes the safe passage by another vehicle. There are no turn offs and few private driveways. This is often and best observed when people illegally park along the river bank and/or the waterfalls which are on located private property and near the roadway.

- Tilthammer Mill and Clay Hill Roads are not designed and will not be able to handle the large number of vehicles, towed tent trailers, travel trailers, camping trailers, pickup campers, and motor homes that frequent these events. Non-resident vehicular traffic will clearly increase and last throughout the day, evening and into the late night and early morning hours by attendees, event staff, vendors and others which could likely exceed 3700 people on these unlighted and unfamiliar roadways.
- The overbearing glow of lights and noise from the stage and camping areas will certainly have an adverse effect on the surrounding area to included residents up/down and on both sides of the river, natural wildlife, and the nearby Wildlife Rehabilitation Center. Although the stage show might end by midnight, the camp noise and lighting by the pedestrian and vehicle traffic of event staff and daily attendees will continue well into the early morning hours.
- There are a number of life safety issues that need to serious consideration and examination such as the use and related issues with commercial and personal generators, fuel, lighting and electrical supply, open fire pits, camp fires, trash disposal, sewage, and most important, environmental protections of the river.
- Recent observations of the proposed site found clear signs that the fencing and underbrush along the river has been removed which could have acted as a barrier and prevented access of festival campers and partygoers to the river. There is evidence of bank erosion and the removal of vegetation. Also observed are the man-made creations of steps and pathways leading from riverbank campsites down to the river which would lead one to believe that preparations for campgrounds have been in progress for some time.
- It is also known and on file with Clarke County, a zoning violation notice and cease and desist letter was served on the new property owner in June 2020. The notice cited complaints of tent and trailer camping and the on-line advertisements of the campground.

Chair Weiss clarified that the campground that was mentioned was not in reference to Shepherds Ford Productions.

Tom Terpack, Boyce

- In respect for your many responsibilities and work load I appreciate the time you will take to review and consider my following endorsement.
- I’m writing in regards to the permit applied for by Shepherds Ford Productions, LLC for multiple events desired to be held over the next year and the continuation of those events over subsequent years.
- I would like to fully endorse the events that this permit application has been submitted for and ask that you grant the permission applied for seeing the many benefits such events bring to our county. Historically and culturally as well as economically, which I must admit I’m less versed on expounding,
- Shepherds Ford Productions, LLC. has not only brought entertainment to our county but broadened the breadth for which it’s culture and beauty have been able to be shared.
- Again to emphasize; I whole heartedly endorse the events that Shepherds Ford Productions, LLC has submitted permit for and emphatically ask that you grant permission to this permit for the full benefit of Clarke County.
- I fully respect your responsibilities and work load and appreciate your time to review and consider my following concerns.
- I’m writing in regards to correspondence I’ve received in regards to the permit applied for by Shepherds Ford Productions, LLC.
- I would like to have recorded in due diligence a multitude of matters that concern me personally.
- As a resident of Calmes Neck Estates and a citizen of Clarke County, I feel very strongly about my individual rights and in such the sanctity of my personal opinions. I also feel very strongly about my need to voice the fact that I cannot know the minds of, and will not claim to speak for, any other resident of
- Clarke County, let alone the small population that resides in my community of Calmes Neck Estates. That leads me to the fact that I’ve been included in numerous emails, both as a recipient of - as well as a falsely implied compliant member of Mr. Stack’s representation.
- Not only has Mr. Stack misrepresented himself as a unilateral spokesman for our community, he has expressed as fact many claims that can easily be proved

- wrong. Mr. Stack's insinuation that he speaks for the community also strikes me as an attempt to disenfranchise the rest of the community members.
- For Mr. Stack to categorically assert his opinion as that of others is plainly wrong.
 - Lastly I'd like to address the matter of Mr. Stack's desire to submit a petition. As I have no qualms with anyone creating and submitting a petition for something they believe in, I certainly encourage a petition process that is properly created and administered. In this sense; I cannot condone a submission by Mr. Stack of a petition that requires only printed names and addresses (as directed by a response to his inquiry for submitting such) since I'm a victim of Mr. Stacks blatant disregard for the rules of a community contact list.
 - If any such petition is submitted by Mr. Stack I must request it be ignored barring a full vetting of its contents by Clarke County prior to its being used as a valid opinion by any County official.

Stacey Sinclair, Boyce

- I am a Clarke County homeowner and fulltime resident of Calmes Neck Estates. A member of my community has shared his opinion against a permit application from Shepherd's Ford Productions. I have concerns with this correspondence. I would like to have my objections recorded.
- I understand that all members of a community can share their opinions. I take exception to the way that Mr. Stack has implied that his perspective is the same as my own. I do not agree with his arguments against the application for this permit. (PH 2020-06) Especially upsetting is his misrepresentation that he is a spokesperson for Calmes Neck Estates. It is false to think that his opinions are those of our community as a whole.
- He has indicated that he will be circulating a petition throughout the neighborhood. He is encouraging community members to submit their names and addresses. It is of concern that he has not shared the content of this petition while at the same time, he is asking for names. He has access to private neighborhood email lists and information. He has used these lists inappropriately in the past. Please vet any such petition and confirm participants' voluntary inclusion in this list.
- I have been a victim and recipient of Mr. Stack's emails to our community. It is upsetting to think that his representation of disprovable and false information

is in alignment with my own views. The scare tactics and hypothetical worst-case scenarios he is presenting only serve to disenfranchise community members. By implying that others are onboard with his accusations, he discourages others from providing their own input.

- Please record my objection to Mr. Stack's self-appointed role as a unilateral spokesperson for our community. His opinions are his alone, and I appreciate the opportunity to share my own perspective.
- I am writing with my wholehearted endorsement of Shepherd's Ford Productions' permit application for events at 1352 Tilthammer Mill Rd. (PH 2020-06) I am a Clarke County resident and a homeowner in Calmes Neck Estates. I value and believe in their events as they enrich the lives of so many in our county. I am excited to see their events at this location. Without hesitation, I encourage you to approve their application.
- As a patron of Shepherd's Ford's events, I have experienced the value they bring to Clarke County. Keeping Bluegrass and Roots music alive in our county is important. The historical significance of maintaining a 30+ year musical tradition enriches our county.
- Their family-friendly events build community in Clarke County. I am absolutely in favor of events that allow families to enjoy the outdoors and experience music together. For many of us, attending Shepherd's Ford events is a beloved tradition. Family and friends are reuniting in Clarke County, bringing their business and tourism. Locating this event at the Island Creek location is ideal for this purpose. I have no problem seeing people gathering across the river from my neighborhood for these events.
- Shepherd's Ford Productions has a track record of care for the environment. Their festivals include environmental education activities for children. They encourage patrons to be mindful of their impact while camping. In the past, they have worked with the Shenandoah River Keepers. I have no doubt that they will continue their responsibility to our landscape. I have no hesitation in seeing their events happen at 1352 Tilthammer Mill Rd.
- Again, I am in favor of approving Shepherd's Ford Productions' application for events at 1352 Tilthammer Mill Rd. property. Hosting three well-run and mindful festivals each year will enrich our community. Please allow Shepherd's Ford Productions to continue their positive impact on Clarke County by approving their permit request.

Gerome Garver, Boyce

- My wife and I have been there for many years. Unfortunately, our driveway is 120 feet from River Farm.
- With the backup of traffic on Tilthammer Mill Road, it is bound to cause a lot of inconveniences and maybe even deny us access to our driveway.
- One of the main reasons why Tilthammer Mill Road and Clay Hill Road are not designed for large volumes of traffic, there are numerous hills and numerous blind curves; some of these blind curves are located on top of the hill. It is just not a safe road for large volumes of traffic.
- On Tilthammer Mill Road, there is one turn, in particular, that is approximately 120 degrees on Tilthammer Mill Road people who are not familiar with the road degrees. No one can negotiate that turn at no more than ten (10) miles per hour. People who are not familiar with the road will be traveling at much higher speeds. There have been occasions in the past where people have not been able to negotiate that turn and have gone down over the bank and into a small stream.
- On outside of the turn, there is no shoulder; you have to go into the bank to make the turn. On the other side of the turn, there are no guardrails.
- I myself have been forced off Tilthammer Mill Road, completely off the road, and through my neighbor's mailbox.
- This is what can happen on a narrow, winding, hilly road.
- The entrance of River Farm is at the bottom of a steep hill, and if traffic is backed-up, people coming down the hill will have a difficult time stopping.
- There are very beautiful waterfalls on Tilthammer Mill Road, and it attracts a lot of attention, even in the summertime when there are four (4) or five (5) cars there, it requires up to three (3) services calls to the Sheriff's Office. Not all of the calls are 911 calls, but the Sheriff's Office has cooperated with the local owner in making daily runs by there to remove trespassers. Can you imagine what 3,000 people will do?
- I know there are some people who are in favor of this.
- Asks the Board of Supervisors if they would want this event next door. Adding that if you ask those people in favor of it if they would want it next door, they would say no.
- Please vote against this special event permit.

Katie Priest, Boyce

- Please include this letter in favor of the Shepherds Ford Productions permit application for events at 1352 Tilthammer Mill Rd, to be included in the minutes for the December 15 public hearing.
- The Watermelon Park Festival (WPF) is a family oriented event that has found a home in Clarke County for many decades. Generations of residents have enjoyed this historic bluegrass festival along the beautiful banks of the Shenandoah River. Children that used to attend with their parents, now attend with their own families. It is unfortunate that the festival is forced to move locations, but it would be even more unfortunate if it had to leave our beloved community all together. The history of the festival and the tourism money it brings to Clarke County is irreplaceable.
- The people that attend WPF are a tight knit community that often feels like family. This festival is for the young, old, and everyone in between. We come together to celebrate music and nature. We take pride in caring for the Shenandoah and the lands surrounding it.
- I live directly across the river from the main stage of the previous location for WPF. I have never had any issues. I believe that if we are approved for the new location, at 1353 Tilthammer Mill Rd, that we can continue to celebrate a decades long tradition in Clarke County while ensuring that the neighbors' concerns are addressed.
- The land in question is over 100 acres. There will be a cap put on the amount of tickets sold. Shepherds Ford Productions has always kept the river and the community at the forefront of the festival, and I believe that they will continue to do so if approved for the new location.
- I respectfully request that the permit for Shepherds Ford Productions be approved for events at 1352 Tilthammer Mill Rd.
- Thank you for your time and consideration.

John Staelin, Boyce

- There are many issues with the Application's documentation that make it incomplete or factually incorrect.
 - The cover page of the application makes it appear that the applicant is asking for 3, three-day events. However, the details listed within the document show that the request is actually for 9, six-day events spread over three years.

- The cover page states that the event “has been previously approved by the Board of Supervisors” (meaning in previous years). However, that is not true. An event of the same name was approved for Watermelon Park in Berryville years ago but no event of any name has ever been approved for the proposed location.
- The Application states that the site’s three adjoining property owners were notified of the Application on October 9, 2020. Contact was made with two of the three neighboring property owners and both said they never received any notification. Such notice is a requirement of the Ordinance. (In addition, the adjoining neighbors across the river were not even listed as neighbors and not were also not notified.)
- The Ordinance states that a scale drawing must be attached showing:
 - Areas of performances or activities and for grandstands or seats, showing the location of aisles for pedestrian travel and other crowd control measures. (Drawing incomplete)
 - All physical facilities existing or to be constructed on the premises, including, but not limited to fences, ticket booths, grandstands and stages. (Drawing incomplete)
 - The location, capacity and nature of all temporary lighting, sound and public address facilities. (Not shown)
 - The location, capacity and nature of all temporary water, toilet, and other public health-related facilities (Not shown)
 - Vehicle ingress, egress and parking plan to include emergency vehicle access. (Drawing incomplete)
 - The application does not make it clear as to whether EMS services will be provided on all 6 of the days Attendees will be on-site or just during the periods when entertainment will be provided.
- These issues plus the fact that the advertisement for the Public Hearing was incorrectly worded should lead to the denial of the application or, at a minimum, a decision to ask for a more complete application and re-advertisement.
- Onsite Safety Issues
 - The Application says that onsite medical services will be provided. It also says that there will be an unobstructed access route for emergency services. This dedicated access route is not shown on the Site Drawing.

- Cell phone reception is often poor in the low-lying areas along the river. This issue must be investigated before any approval is given for this Application.
- There will be up to 3,750 Attendees and Staff on the property during the event. That is the equivalent of over 25% of the County's population all packing themselves into one event site.
- The Application states that the organizers will provide on-site EMS medical services. It is unclear if those services will be provided throughout the entire six days of the event or only while the music is playing.
- There is only one access point to the event site off Tilthammer Mill Rd. The attached photo shows that the entry point is narrow and cannot be easily expanded due to a neighboring stream and rock cliff. It is impossible to have a dedicated, unobstructed route for emergency services in addition to the combined entry/exit way for Attendees.



- Onsite Safety Issues (continued)
 - This sole entrance/exit point also limits the ability to have Attendees enter and leave the facility at the same time. There will be people coming for only a day as well as weekend attendees. Thus, given that there could be 3,500 on site, some cars will always be coming and going. At times it will be impossible for either emergency vehicles or Attendees to leave in a timely fashion. (There may be other access limitations, but this is the only one visible from a public highway.)
 - There could be 3,000 to 4,000 trips per day, each day for several days in and out of the facility. If there is a rainy period either during or before any event this road could become an inaccessible mud pit. Remember, there will be large campers, trucks with trailers as well as passenger cars.
 - River safety is also an issue. This property has close to a mile of unfenced River frontage.
 - There will be 3,500 attendees on site and summer temperatures could easily be in the 90s. A good number of the attendees will likely desire to cool off in the river.
 - There are few, if any, approved water access points along the river and the banks are steep.
 - If the River is high and swift even an experienced swimmer could be swept away and find it nearly impossible to get back on land due to the steep banks and stream bank vegetation.
 - There is also a chance, albeit slight, that the entire event site could flood. The entire site is on a flood plain. There is no flood disaster plan attached to the Application.
- Offsite Safety Issues
 - As shown in the earlier photo, the site’s entrance is narrow and capable of only one-way traffic. If some cars are exiting, no cars can enter. This will inevitably lead to some stacking of vehicles on Tilthammer Mill Rd. The area where the cars would “stack” is hidden by a curve (especially when the trees are full of leaves) and is located at the bottom of a hill. Stacking at in this area would be very dangerous. VDOT’s approval letter was contingent upon an absence of stacking so it may be null and void.

- The Application says attendees will be encouraged to enter the property from the Route 50 side. It says that signage will be used to direct cars from Rt. 50 to the site. However, no traffic plan is attached.
 - What route will be “encouraged” for the mass of Attendees to use when coming via the more heavily travelled Rt. 7. (via Millwood? Waterloo?).
 - Few people will likely read the notice regarding the “encouraged” route. These days people follow the instructions on their GPS App. That will likely lead those coming via Rt 7 down one of the western approaches (through Millwood or down Clay Hill Rd).
 - GPS systems will most likely route the campers and cars down Clay Hill Rd. That entryway is over two miles long and has 7 hills that restrict site distance to both on-coming and turning traffic. Clay Hill Rd also has two 90° turns that offer virtually no ability for a vehicle to see any oncoming vehicle that might be taking that same curve a bit too tightly. It also has 8 curves with limited site distance. There have been two accidents requiring hospitalization on Clay Hill Road and one accident that ended up with a fatality.
 - The distance from Rt. 50 to the Event site via Tilthammer Mill Rd. is about 1.5 miles. That access includes a 90° turn, 4 curves with restricted site distance and 4 hills also restricting site distance.
 - Both Clay Hill Rd and Tilthammer Rd are very narrow in spots. There are areas where the width of the pavement is only 15 feet.
 - There are places in these roads with no shoulder or very narrow shoulders.
 - Access via Millwood would include all the barriers of the Tilthammer Mill RD. access plus the difficult “downtown” Millwood turn, on-road parking and pedestrian congestion.
 - Clarke also has more deer per square mile than virtually all other Virginia Counties. They will be frightened by the music and rushing in every direction. Cars will be leaving the event in the dark. There will undoubtedly be collisions with deer at some point. That could totally block one of the only two exit routes.
- All of the above issues will be exacerbated by the fact that many people will be driving wide campers or pulling trailers. Wide vehicles are cause for great concern when they are traveling roads as narrow as 15 feet

- especially when those roads also have limited site distance to oncoming traffic.
- There will be up to 3,750 Attendees and Staff on the property during the event. That is the equivalent of having over 25% of the County's population coming and going on two small roads.
 - VDOD has stated it has no problems with the Event as long as it does not cause stacking that blocks any highway. That is the usual VDOT stance. They believe that the Commonwealth's roads should be open to all. They mostly fear stacking (a problem here which should negate their approval letter) and expect local County officials to evaluate all other safety issues.
 - The County Sheriff also has a tradition of staying out of decisions like this. He leaves the approval process to the Supervisors. The Sheriff and his Deputies will do their best to keep everyone safe regardless of whatever decision the Board of Supervisors might make.
- General Safety Issues
- Clarke is a small County. This event will increase its population by over 25%. The Sheriff's Department, Fire Companies, and EMS units are already stretched thin. The Event organizers will provide onsite medical services, but it is not clear if those will be provided on all six days of the event. Any medical incident that occurs offsite as well as those that occur on-site when the hired units are gone or overworked will be the responsibility of County personnel or volunteers. Also, the 911 staff will have to field all emergency calls and dispatch Sheriff Deputies, Fire Companies, and EMS units as needed for either primary response or backup to Event personnel.
 - No mention is made in the Application as to whether there is cell phone coverage throughout the Event site. It is a low-lying area, and many similar areas in the County have limited cell phone reception. Certainly, the capacity of the nearest cell phone tower could easily be over-taxed.
- Environmental Issues
- The site has close to a mile of river frontage, and there is no fencing along the river to keep the Attendees away from it.
 - There will be 3,500 Attendees on-site, and temperatures could easily be in the 90s. A good number of attendees will likely desire to cool off in the river.

- There are few, if any, approved access points along the river and the banks are steep.
- The Commonwealth has paid for fencing to keep livestock away from the river and prevent damage to the river banks. That fencing is uphill from the event area. There is no fence to keep people away from the river or its vegetative banks.
- The County also has a Stream Bank Protection Ordinance that prohibits damage to the banks and the vegetation that protects those banks. Nothing in the Application indicates how the organizers will ensure stream bank protection.
- Given the natural inclination of the 3,500 Attendees to want to cool off, stream bank damage is inevitable.
- Impact On Wildlife Centers
 - There are two State Licensed Wildlife Centers on land abutting the proposed Event. Both rehabilitate injured wildlife.
 - These Centers not only rehabilitate injured wildlife, they conduct educational programs for our youth, train interns, and provide employment to many people.
 - Both have invested large sums in facilities. One facility went through the Special Use Permitting process due to its size and scope.
 - Nothing should be allowed to threaten their reputation, risk their state licensure, and diminish their ability to accomplish their mission or keep them from providing the highest level of service.
 - There will be noise-causing events each day from 10:00 AM to Midnight. After that, there will be noise causes by up to 3,500 Attendees.
- Event Ordinance
 - Specifically states that the applicant shall apply by all Federal, State, and Local laws, ordinances, and regulations, including Zoning Ordinance regulations and special use provisions applicable to the property.
 - The map of the event shows a campground that is a use that requires a special use permit per the County Ordinances.
 - The proposed event site does not have such a special use permit.

- Believe Watermelon Park and the Fairgrounds are grandfathered into those such purposes, but this property has never been approved for that and was closed down for such purpose last summer.
- Heard some say that camping should be an ancillary use to the event to be allowed, but I disagree with that in terms of representation because there are nothing in the event ordinance or the special use regulations that supports that view.
- The event ordinance is extremely clear that all zoning rules must be followed.
- The event proposes for three (3) days while camping is proposed for six (6) days, so even with the most liberal interpretation, one that I do not support, the application is asking for three (3) non-event camping days on the land which is not zoned for that purpose.
- Think this event would be legal in other locations like Watermelon Park and the Fairgrounds, but not on this site.
- Impact On Two (2) Neighboring Organizations
 - Neither of them was given the required legal notice of the event.
 - Both the Blue Ridge Wildlife Center and Belinda Burwell, who spoke earlier, are State certifies wildlife rescue centers. We should be proud to have groups like this.
 - They are adjacent to the proposed event site.
 - Together they have spent over a million dollars on infrastructure and equipment.
 - Additional rehabilitate wild animals; they employ local citizens, train interns, conduct classes for children, and provide services to the wildlife.
 - They followed all of the County regulations, and in the case of the Blue Ridge Center, they received a special use permit from this Board for those purposes.
 - The wildlife center wrote a letter in the last several hours, I read it, and it is very clear that they believe this will be a serious effect on their day-to-day operations because of health problems with the animals that they are trying to save.
 - Encourage you to read those letters and to not do anything that would impact the State certifications of these centers.
- Summary

- There are too many unchangeable negatives associated with this Application to approve it. There are also many unanswered questions.

Jeffrey Stack, Boyce

- As a resident of Calmes Neck Estates for the past 10 years, I wholeheartedly oppose the application for a series of events for this property and any other future applications to hold commercial operations or events. This activity would be devastating to the community, the river, and the environment, and is an unacceptable venue for the proposed events - this is not and should never be a commercial property.
- Effect on the Calmes Neck Estates Community:
- My property, as well as most of Calmes Neck Estates, is less than 1001 from the proposed event map on the opposite side of the river, and the proposed plans would immediately and directly impact our community. From the attached picture, which is taken from my deck, you can see the impact these events will have on my home (and the many other properties with similar views) as I will be:
 - looking directly at thousands of people, their campers, port-a-potties,
 - listening to noise pollution for weeks from the bands, the campers, and the vehicles, and
 - being adversely impacted by light pollution and other nuisances.
- I have been to several events like this down at Watermelon Park, and while the scheduled music does end at a certain time, the same cannot be said for the camping area. Everyone impacted by this needs to know the level of noise that is allowed after a certain time of night? What about the generators for these campsites that will run nonstop the entire time? What about people playing music until all hours at their sites? Who will be controlling this? In my experience the music goes on long after the scheduled event is closed for the evening.
- My particular property is probably the closest one to the camping area and from my house I can see the entire farm. This farm has already tried to operate an illegal commercial campground and was warned by Clarke County to cease and desist. They had a total of 10 nightly rental campers on the grounds. This was suspended after a period of time, but the damage had already been done. Even with only 10 campers the noise level was audible across Calmes Neck and went well into the night. The owner did not shut down voluntarily, he shut

down with a cease and desist order from Clarke County. He openly advertised with a website about the commercial campground with no permits to run such a business. There was no regulation on sanitation or waste disposal and to this day we do not know where the sewage from 10 campers was disposed of. Please see the five attached photos of my view and the property in question.

- Impact on the River
- The owner has not shown any respect for the effect his actions have had on the community or the river. There are now 5 illegal river access points that have been carved into the dirt with dirt stairs and even aluminum ladders providing river access for the campers. The riparian buffer zone has been destroyed almost the entire length of the property. The damage cannot be repaired in a short period of time. These access points are dumping silt and cattle debris into the river where once they would have been controlled by plants and trees. Those are gone. This portion of the river has little traffic because there are no commercial float companies on it.
- I feel Clarke County is a unique place that still offers pristine landscapes and spectacular views of the valley below. Taking those away even for short periods of time ruins everything that Clarke is known for. There are commercial venues within the county that are made and zoned to hold such events. A farm property zoned for agricultural use only is not the place. Making money at the expense of the surrounding community with no regard to our river, flora and fauna is in direct conflict as to why we moved here. We protect these things in every way that we can.
- Impact on the Environment
- There are at least 3 mating pairs of Bald Eagles that reside in a 1 mile stretch of river that borders the property. These birds will be permanently affected by having so many people in the area. If you spend anytime down by Watermelon Park you would know there are no Bald Eagles that reside on that stretch of the river. I am sure there used to be before it became a busy commercial property.
- In addition to the light pollution from the events, the campers, and the cars, just the noise from people camping is magnified as it travels across the river and completely ruins the peace and tranquility of what is supposed to be our rural, residential home.
- In closing please do not allow this to happen to such a great area. I am not against the events, I just feel they should be held at appropriate sites. Using

the Shenandoah River as a festival type attraction will forever damage our river. Not to mention the pristine spring located at the very edge of the property. Do not grant this permit and I respectfully add that any future applications to run a commercial business on the listed property never be approved. Thank you for your time.







Petition:

**STOP THE ISLAND FARM SPECIAL EVENT
PERMIT AND COMMERCIAL CAMPGROUND**

The residents of Calmes Neck Estates and Surrounding area request that the application for special events to be held at 1352 Tilthammer Mill Rd in Boyce and requested by Shepherds Ford Productions, and the land owner Steve Niswander be denied and no further applications will be approved for special events or any type of commercial campground.

The impact on the community, traffic and the river would be forever changed.

1. Kirsten Davis 2977 Calmes Neck Lane, Boyce Va 22620
2. Jeffrey Stack 159 Oak Cliff Lane Boyce VA 22620
3. Paul Zeisset Oak Cliff Lane Boyce
4. Claus Helbing & Katrin Helbing, Ina Monahan. 136 Blue Bird Ln Boyce
5. Doug and Diane Jackson 1125 Leeds Manor Lane Bluemont, VA 20135
6. James Fergusson & Sarah Heintzman 1527 Calmes Neck Lane Boyce VA 22620
7. Tom and Laura Bell of 3839 Calmes Neck Ln Boyce VA 22620
8. Kevin and Laura Jackson 1843 Calmes Neck Ln Boyce, VA 22620
9. Sandra Priest 70 Little River Lane Boyce, VA 22620
10. Elizabeth Johnson, Karen Morgan, Neil Johnson, John Morgan 1007 Calmes Neck Lane. Boyce VA 22620
11. Jennifer Conley 120 Bluebird Lane Boyce VA 22620
12. Joe & Lois Nolter 130 Robin Lane Boyce VA 22620
13. John White 0 Eagle Point Lane Boyce, VA 22620
14. Joe and Jennifer Zebrine 2726 Calmes Neck Lane Boyce VA 22620
15. Margaret Wester 181 Little River Lane Boyce, VA 22620
16. Jeremiah and Lindsay Smith 1409 Calmes Neck Lane Boyce, VA 22620
17. Richard H. Miller 4065 Calmes Neck Lane Boyce, VA 22620
18. Andrea Torczon, owner, 3968 Calmes Neck Lane, Boyce, VA
19. Frits and Jane Geurtsen 222 Barred Owl Lan3 Calmes Neck Boyce, VA 22620
20. Carl and Katherine Thomas 3487 Calmes Neck Lane Boyce VA 22620
21. Rosslyn Selzer 320 S Washington St., Winchester, VA 22601
22. Ed and Zita Zduoba 4001 Calmes Neck Boyce VA 22620
23. Howard Runge 1307 Calmes Neck Lane in Boyce, 22620
24. Cuno Anderson 698 Tilthammer Mill Rd Boyce VA 22620

Bruce Anderson, Boyce

- This letter is to voice our opposition to the proposal to allow the land owner to convert "agricultural open space" zoned property along Tilthammer Mill Road into a temporary but recurring concert venue and commercial campground. Although we appreciate the nature of the events and that they will generate income to the landowner and others from such activities, establishing this venue for ongoing concerts, camping and related activities along Tilthammer Road adjacent to the Shenandoah River is inconsistent with current zoning, potentially dangerous for nearby residents and livestock from increased traffic, and will undoubtedly adversely impact the character and ambiance of this area.
- By way of background, we bought a 32 acre farm at the intersection of Millwood Road and Tilthammer Mill Road about a year ago because of the relative isolation, ambiance, quiet and peacefulness of rural life in Northern Virginia. We enjoy equestrian activities, fishing and the beautiful natural environment in the Shenandoah Valley. Boyce County has a reputation for environmental conservation and protection, which we appreciate, and this is one of the major reasons we chose this place to live. We support the environmental protection principles the Commission has thus far defended and believe they should be fiercely protected against incompatible commercial activities.
- We heard about the proposed special activities from our neighbors, not from the developer. For a commercial development of this type given its widespread impact on the surrounding community, individual letters to all landowners on Tilthammer Mill Rd should at least have been required. The increased traffic and other impacts generated by these activities will certainly impact more than just adjacent property owners.
- Based only on the application, it is our understanding that there are at least two major events proposed during 2021: First, the River and Roots Festival in June; then, the Watermelon Pickers Festival in September 2021. Other unnamed events are proposed from June through September 2021. In the application, it is stated that a total of approximately 5,000 people will be attending the two major events. The application suggests that other events will also be scheduled, but there is no description of these events nor is there

- any indication of the number of people who would be attending. As proposed, it is anticipated that these events will be recurring for at least several years.
- Each of these events will last for a week. Overnight camping (for a fee) will be allowed for a few days before and after the events. Campers and other patrons are encouraged to bring their own bottled water. This suggests there may not be adequate potable water available for drinking purposes, much less showering or bathing, dishwashing, laundry or other important sanitation activities.
 - The only accommodations for human waste disposal proposed are portable toilets, which are not intended for regular or long-term use. As proposed, vendors will provide food service but there is little discussion of whether they will have approved kitchens on location or bring in prepared foods nor is there any description of how campers would prepare or cook their meals. The closest food service establishments or markets are in Boyce, Millwood, Berryville, which is at least a 15 minute drive from the proposed campground.
 - Liquor will be sold and consumed on site under a "banquet permit" allowance. The proposed concerts will last until midnight over several days. This is not a banquet, rather an extended party/event lasting for at least several days. It will undoubtedly result in an excessive consumption of liquor for many who attend with all the problems and issues associated with alcohol consumption.
 - Our specific concerns with the proposal are as follows:
 - First, the activities proposed are inconsistent with existing zoning. The area is zoned as "agricultural open space." It is based on that zoning that residents here purchased their property, including us. A commercial concert venue and campground is not consistent with agricultural open space activities. This fact alone should be cause for disapproval.
 - Second, the increased traffic along Tilthammer Road during these proposed events poses a serious risk to residents, livestock and others in the area. Tilthammer Mill Road is a dangerous road at the best of times. Drivers race along the narrow 2-lane road mostly exceeding the legal 55 mph limit. Regardless of the permit approval, the County should reduce the limit to 35 mph to ensure the safety of current landowners. It is estimated that there will be 5,000 patrons attending the two events during the first year of the festivals alone. Even if the projected number of attendees is accurate, it will increase traffic at least 20-100 fold during those days. With the proposed late-night concerts along with alcohol consumption, it is anticipated this dramatic

increase in traffic will pose a serious hazard of motor vehicle injuries to residents and livestock not to mention increased noise nuisance throughout the day and late at night when the concerts end.

- Third, the Shenandoah River is a national treasure that needs to be protected, not exploited. Expecting thousands of campers to only use the portable toilets for multiple days is naive at best. Indeed, it would be expected that many campers will relieve themselves without going to portable toilets even if they are available over a period of several days. The lack of showers, laundry and other sanitation facilities, considered essential for trailer parks and other commercial campgrounds, is also of concern. Human waste is a concern if it is not properly managed and will result in groundwater contamination and polluted runoff into the nearby Shenandoah River. There is no discussion of how trash and other solid waste will be handled.
- Finally, with COVID cases and deaths peaking in Virginia and the surrounding DC area, this is not the time to try to be accommodating large gatherings and events. Successful wide-scale deployment of an effective vaccine may reduce risks associated with COVID transmission over the next year or so, but it should not be assumed that will happen any time soon. Music festivals/events are particularly risky from an infection standpoint given that the virus is transmitted through droplets and aerosols created while singing and playing instruments. Large gatherings of any sort are inherently risky regardless of precautions taken, including the wearing of masks and/or physical distancing, particularly when accompanied by food and drink.
- In conclusion, the events proposed are inconsistent with existing zoning. We all depend on zoning restrictions to maintain the quality of life we expect and in preserving property values. Traffic along Tilthammer Mill Road will dramatically increase as a result of the proposed events. The large number of people camping and visiting the site will unduly increase pressure on the natural resources and environment along the Shenandoah River. Inadequate sanitation and waste management measurements have been proposed to support the thousands of people camping along the River. This will undoubtedly result in unacceptable risks to human health and the environment.
- We strongly recommend that this request for a special event permit application be denied. We have no objections to the nature of the events proposed, but the site proposed is inappropriate.

Supervisor Catlett read the following citizen comment into the record.

Joe Nolter, Boyce

- Recommendation: Deny this Permit Request.
- I live in the Calmes Neck community and, as explained below, I strongly recommend the Clarke County Board of Supervisors deny the Special Event Permit Request by Shepherds Ford Productions, LLC. (reference (a)).
- Reasons to Deny:
 - #1: Festivals will be only 250 feet from the Calmes Neck neighborhood zoned residential.
 - #2: This Permit Application presents conflicts with the Clarke County Zoning Ordinance.
 - #3: This Permit Application is incomplete and does not satisfy the Code of Clarke County.
 - #4: Large-scale camping is planned without a permit before and after each festival.
- #1: Festivals will be only 250 Feet from the Calmes Neck Neighborhood Zoned Rural Residential: The Shepherds Ford Permit Application, as submitted, is incomplete and ignores the existence of the Calmes Neck neighborhood.
- The permit application erroneously implies each festival will occur in the sparsely populated Clarke County countryside with little disruption to residential zoned areas.
- In reality, the festivals will occur about 250 feet (+/-) across the Shenandoah River from Calmes Neck, a quiet neighborhood of single-family homes zoned Rural Residential (see map in Enclosure (1)).
- Holding several 3 daylong festivals with alcohol available to an expected 3500 attendees, using bright stage lights and playing amplified music from noon until midnight near a residential neighborhood of single family homes will violate the quiet, peaceful environment I expect from Clarke County Rural Residential zoning.
- I depend on the Clarke County Board of Supervisors to ensure the spirit and intent of Clarke County Rural Residential Zoning requirements are maintained and enforced.
- #2: This Permit Application presents conflicts with the Clarke County Zoning Ordinance. The Calmes Neck neighborhood is zoned rural residential and, as

such, residents rely on zoning enforcement to promote and encourage a suitable environment for family life, and to prohibit all activities of a commercial or industrial natureⁱ.

- It seems illogical to me that the Board of Supervisors might approve the Shepherds Ford Permit Application and allow, within a few hundred feet of the Calmes Neck neighborhood, nine 3 daylong festivals involving up to 3,500 attendees, alcohol, loud music, bright lights and amplified music from noon until midnightⁱⁱ.
- This zoning conflict is especially aggravating to me because, as stated in the Clarke County Zoning Ordinance (2020), the burden of proof is on Shepherds Ford Productions, LLC to show lack of adverse effectⁱⁱⁱ due to noise and light^{iv} on neighboring property^v.
 - The Shepherds Ford Permit Application (reference (a)) avoids its zoning obligations by totally ignoring the existence of the Calmes Neck neighborhood 250 feet away from the festival site.
- #3: This Permit Application is Incomplete and does not satisfy the Code of Clarke County: The permit application process defined in the Code of Clarke County requires applicants to notify by letter all “Adjacent Property Owners.^{vi}” The application submitted by Shepherds Ford Productions, LLC notifies only three property owners – none from Calmes Neck.
- Many Calmes Neck properties owners meet the definition of adjacent property owners but were not notified.
 - The Code of Clarke County defines an Adjacent Property Owner^{vii}: *“The owner of property or properties immediately contiguous to or directly across public rights of way, private access easements, railroad rights of way/easements, any streams, rivers, or lakes, and state or county political boundaries) from the tax map parcel containing the site of the proposed outdoor event.”*
- Shepherds Ford Productions, LLC did not satisfy its obligation, as set forth in the Code of Clarke County, to inform Calmes Neck adjacent property owners of the permit application. This failure to notify Calmes Neck property owners has disadvantaged the Calmes Neck community because it significantly decreased the time it had to plan, prepare and comment to the Board of Supervisors.

- Without identifying the festivals' close proximity to single family housing at Calmes Neck, the level of disruption to the Calmes Neck community is not properly conveyed to the Board of Supervisors.
- #4: Large-Scale Camping is planned without a permit before and after each festival: Camping for festival attendees is planned for two days before and one day after each festival. This information is mentioned only in the letters sent to three property owners – it is discovered only by a detailed reading of each letter.
- A permit is required for any event in Clarke County at which 150 or more people are expected^{viii}. To date, no permit has been requested or issued for the planned large-scale camping at the beginning and end of the festivals.
- The Shepherds Ford Permit Application (reference (a)) covers camping only during the 3-day festival period. The large-scale camping before and after each festival is not part of the Shepherds Ford Permit Application; consequently, it escapes the oversight provided by the permitting process.
- I depend on Clarke County Government's oversight and the permitting process to ensure health, safety and environmental protection requirements are satisfied for events^{ix} such as the large-scale camping planned before and after each of the festivals.
- Summary: Based on the festivals' proximity to a residential neighborhood, zoning conflicts, an incomplete permit application and the lack of proper notification of Calmes Neck adjacent property owners, the Shepherds Ford Productions, LLC permit application for nine music festivals over three years should be denied by the Board of Supervisors.
- Thank you for your time and consideration.

The following citizens sent in there comment via email to County Administration, who read the following verbatim via pre-recording into the record.

Amanda Cummings

- This email is in support of Watermelon Park Fest permit. Please consider the Shepherds Ford's permit application for events at 1352 Tilthammer Mill Road to be included in the minuted December 15th public hearing.

Andrea Torczon, Boyce

- Thank you for providing an opportunity to comment on the application requested by Shepherds Ford Productions for proposed events at 1352 Tilthammer Mill Road, Boyce, VA (landowner Steve Neiswander). I have a home on Calmes Neck Lane in Clarke County. I oppose this application.
- My opposition is based on concerns that are not limited to a single event, because approval of any special event is likely to lead to applications for other fee-generating activities or events on that property, including campground rentals, which involve non-residential or non-agricultural use by members of the public. These concerns include the negative impacts such events or activities will have on our property value, the wildlife and plants, and members of the public who use the river (for free) for recreational kayaking, canoeing, or fishing.
- The stretch of river from the public launch site by the bridge at Route 50 and down along Calmes Neck is incredibly beautiful. It is such a treasure. A short day trip on the river there can feel like a world away from everything, providing a needed break and renewal of the soul for busy adults, a wonderful experience of nature for families with children—who can easily spot in a single afternoon many different species near the water, in the water, or skimming above the surface—and a deep sense of appreciation that such a pristine area has been preserved. That’s why my husband and I decided to buy our place there. We love it.
- The proposed event, or similar events, would bring large groups of people for extended periods, which will produce a high level of noise, disrupt or drive away wildlife, further degrade the vegetation on the river bank along that property, which appears to have been removed in connection with recent campground use of the property, and significantly detract from the experience for people passing by on the river.
- We are happy that other people enjoy that stretch of the river as well. We don’t feel we “own” it or want to keep other people who don’t live there from enjoying it. The concern is with having the rare, unspoiled character changed so dramatically by a single property owner for that owner’s private benefit. Members of the public can already enjoy that stretch of river, generally in small groups and for short duration, in its current, natural state. For the public to enjoy the proposed event and similar activities, this location is not needed because there are other available locations, right in Clarke County or other places nearby, that are already suited to such activities.

- Although I am not a full-time resident in Clarke County, we pay our property taxes, shop locally, and use the services of local contractors. We care very much about the community and the environment there. I appreciate your consideration of these concerns.

Howard and Carol Borgstrom, Boyce

- This is to express our strong opposition to the Special Event Application(s) by Shepherds Ford Productions, LLC for 1352 Tilthammer Mill Road, Boyce, VA 22620. We object not only to the substance of the application but also to the deception of the review process.
- While our mailing address is in Fairfax County, we own Lot 55 of Calmes Neck Estates, immediately across the Shenandoah River from the former McIntyre Farm property being considered for all these special events. The McIntyre’s were good neighbors who cared about the Calmes Neck community across the river, and they were conscientious about maintaining vegetative borders to preserve stream quality. The current owners have been actively reducing the protective border and have been unreliable in adhering to special use restrictions. For the Board, you should check with County staff on the number of reports of tree-cutting and campsite rental during the past year. These people should not be given any open-ended, multi-year, or unsupervised permits. Period.
- The application claims to have been submitted to “adjacent” landowners, whereas we have only heard about the application this month. While we on Calmes Neck may be separated from the applicant’s property by the river, it is sickening to think of what 3500 attendees will produce in the way of waste, noise, sediment, and light pollution. Clarke County has an easement authority with a solid reputation for preservation of our natural resources, but this progress would be rapidly undone by approval of this application.

Carol Sullivan; LQH Ranch, Boyce

- I am writing on behalf of LQH Ranch located on Clay Hill Road to go on record as being vehemently opposed to the proposed RV Park and Music Festival (PH 2020-26) being discussed by the BOS Tuesday, December 15.
- The potential environmental, traffic, and public safety issues connected with this proposal would be a nightmare for all.

Celeste Borel, Boyce

- I am not opposed to events per se. I do wonder what type of music events and
- what type of people will attend.
- I don't think the property proposed is a good use for this agricultural land. The
- proximity to the river and limited access make for a disaster waiting to happen. The negative impact on the river, the traffic, the access and the frequency of the events, as well as the campground, leaves many unanswered questions.
- Who controls the traffic? How will emergency vehicles access the property when there is only limited access? Has there been an entrance evaluation for the property by the highway department.
- What type of septic and sewage systems will be in place? How will the noise ordinance be upheld? Has the surrounding neighbors been advised of this? How about the animal conservation facilities? Will the animals be impacted? Will their operations be impacted.
- I remember the last year of White Post Celebrates. Over 25,000 people showed up. What if that happens as there is no upper limit?
- What will be in impact on the Shenandoah River? Aside from pollution, what about the small road and the limited real access? You know it would be trashed.
- I strongly urge the BOS to not approve this application especially with the unknowns not properly addressed in their application. I am for protecting the rural character of Clarke County. It does not need another large venue site. I would prefer the use of the Ruritan Grounds, with good access to roads, emergency services, highway and built in septic and water supplies.

Cornelius Holcomb, Boyce

- I am writing in support of the petition by Shepherds Ford to hold the Watermelon Park bluegrass fest at 1352 Tilt Hammer Rd. This music festivals family friendly and preserve traditional bluegrass music and dates back to the 60s.
- Please support local artists!

David Borger, NSVAS, Boyce

- The mission of the Northern Shenandoah Valley Audubon Society (NSVAS) is to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats in Clarke County and adjacent counties.
- On December 8, 2020, the Board of Directors voted unanimously to (1) express our objection to the permit PH 2020-06: Watermelon Pickers Fest, River & Roots Festival, single-day event Special Event Permit Application and (2) formally request that the Board of Supervisors of Clarke County conduct a comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment to identify the impacts of a large event of this nature being conducted in an area zoned for agricultural use.
- The proposed venue for this event encompasses sensitive wildlife habitat for more than 130 species of birds, including nesting Bald Eagles. The NSVAS Board of Directors believes that the proposed event will cause permanent harm to the riparian buffer along the riverbanks due to people trying to access the river. The Board is concerned that the noise and light pollution from the music events, campers, and traffic will cause harm to wildlife. In addition, the influx of thousands of people is likely to result in litter and waste ending up in the river impacting the health of people and wildlife.
- We urge the Board of Supervisors of Clarke County to protect and preserve this natural area that is part of the fabric that makes Clarke County unique.

Frazer Watkins, Boyce

- It seems our application process will be more involved this year. I am sure you will have seen the letter from Mr. Stack. Re: Our pending festival application.
- I am requesting that the Board fact check any submission you have received for consideration in this matter. I am aware of differences in the letter to the County and the letter to the other landowners. and I want to make sure the board is accurately informed on all matters before it. (see attached)
- The objection seems to be focused at someone other than the applicant. I nor my business have ever tried to start an illegal campground etc. We have no ties to the property, this is a straight up short term lease with no plans to do anything other than what we stated. Shepherds Ford Productions, LLC is a respected business in our community with a long history of working with the County to mend fences. If Mr. Stack has a beef with Mr. Neiswander or the County, it is a separate matter from anything Shepherds Ford Productions has before you. Shepherds Ford Productions remains as always, interested in

- working with our neighbors to create solutions for matters that pertain to our efforts. We can not however be accountable for matters not pertaining to us.
- Shepherds Ford Productions is in Contact with the County Administrator's Office to determine all current procedures involved in the public hearing process. I will not be attending in person. However, I wish to know the proper way to have our perspective included. If the Board or Administrator have any questions for the applicant please inquire, we are available any time to help clarify these matters.
 - With all due respect

Jake King-Gilbert, Boyce

- My name is Jake King-Gilbert and I am a resident of the Calmes Neck Estates. I would to formally voice my concerns with the Festival Application from Island Farms (applicant under Shepard's Ford Production LLC). I am concerned about the impact this will have on my property, which is directly across from the farm, and the environment. I witnessed first hand this past summer of the impact of the illegal camp site that were set up on this property, loud music, land being demolished, trash, and just overall unsightly appearance of what was there. I am concerned that this festival application is just a work around to get a full blown camp site operating on this piece of land, a foot in the door if you will. There seem to be plenty of other places in Clarke Co for these events to take place, don't need to add another. I fully understand the owner of this property is trying to maximize its value by bringing another revenue streams, but it was zoned agricultural for a reason and should stay this way. I approve of Jeff Stacks to speak on my behalf at the upcoming hearing.
- Please let me know if you have any questions or comments.

James Ferguson and Sarah Heintzman, Boyce

- We are residents of Calmes Neck with a home that looks out over Island View Farm and we write regarding their application to hold large events. We wish to voice our concern and opposition to this plan as it would have several negative impacts on us directly but also on the community and the environment of this stretch of the Shenandoah.
- The stretch of the Shenandoah north of Route 50 is very unusual in that it has forestry on the east bank that is under a conservation easement and agricultural land on the west bank (which I also was under the impression had

an easement on it). This means that it is quiet and abundant in nature and is not impacted by private residential properties or campsites. We and many in the community have enjoyed this over the decades both directly for kayaking on but also as our home overlooks that same stretch from a height of 800ft above on Calmes Neck ridge. Despite the height, we enjoy the tranquility of view and the peace and quiet – we can hear cows down on the farm land despite the height/distance.

- We have been saddened this summer by the illegal camping on this stretch of river. While we don't begrudge anyone getting outdoors during the pandemic, there are plenty of legal, formal camping sites along the Shenandoah, including Watermelon Park which provides ample camping and event venue space for Clarke County and leaves us wondering why more would be needed in our small county at the expense of this uniquely tranquil stretch of river and associated community. Large events would result in increased noise (if we can hear cows below we will certainly hear crowds and concerts), increased waste and pollution in the river, and the loss of an unimpacted natural stretch of river.
- Thank you for your consideration.

Joey Zebrine, Boyce

- I am a property owner in Calmes Neck, and am aware of the proposed concert venue being discussed on the former McIntire farm. We have been residents here for about 8 years, and love the solace and tranquility of the area. We
- sought out loving here for that very reason. I am an avid outdoorsman, and very much in tune with the wildlife and the beauty of the area.
- We are very concerned with the prospect of this being a concert venue. From our residence on the ridge, we can clearly here the cattle across the river on Tilthammer Road as if they're on our property. That is more than 2 miles away. I can only imagine the volume in which a crowded concert would project.
- On a clear night, I can actually hear concerts at Watermelon Park from my back deck which is miles away. This will be tenfold at the proposed site.
- Since the onset of Covid, there has already been a tremendous surge of people from the more urban areas of northern Virginia trying to find ~space." This has been an intrusion in itself against our rural way of life. Houses are selling as soon as they hit the market, for often times more than the asking price. We

are receiving unsolicited requests about selling our house. I am not against new residents or visitors, but not in this capacity and at this pace.

- There are other areas and venues for events such as this. We don't need potentially thousands of people on the banks of our river we've worked so hard to clean up. The residual waste from this volume of people will be detrimental to the landscape and river.
- With this all being said, we don't need to encourage more people converging to the area. It's already happening. While I respect and acknowledge the value of arts in our society, specifically here in Clarke, I believe this will adversely impact the surrounding community more than benefit.

John Hoel, Boyce

- I come before the Clarke County Board of Supervisors this evening to express my complete and unalterable opposition to the application for a Special Event Permit submitted for three (3) music festivals in 2021, 2022 and 2023: the Watermelon Pickers Fest, the River and Roots Festival and a yet to be named third event by Shepherd Ford Productions, LLC and Steve Neiswander.
- I own the property at 1650 Tilthammer Mill Road, Boyce, VA. My property abuts part of Mr. Neiswander property on the East embankment of Spout Run starting approximately at the bridge crossing Tilthammer Mill Road (SR 621) until Spout Run joins the Shenandoah River. A highlight of my property is the 100 year-old hunting cottage that has been in the family for decades. I have spent considerable time and expense to rehabilitate the structure while maintaining its historic character. The foundation of my cottage was built with stone from the Tilthammer Mill's tailings. The property includes two waterfalls. I have spent many enjoyable hours talking to my neighbor, Winston Sipe, and learning about the history of the Tilthammer Mill, the cottage and Clarke County.
- I have come to love the history, tranquility and beauty of Clarke County. There are many appealing aspects to Clarke County, but the commitment to historic preservation, agriculture and land conservation top of my list.
- The 200+ acres Mr. Neiswander recently purchased has been zoned agriculture and been actively farmed for generations. He purchased it as a farm, he has hired people to produce crops on the land and it should remain solely agricultural, not turned into some type of Woodstock music festival venue or a for-profit campground.

- I have reviewed the Special Event Permit application and would like to express my top objections:
 - Contrary to the application’s assertion, I NEVER received a letter from Shepherds Ford Productions, LLC. Any assertion by the applicant to the contrary is outright false. I learned about the pending application and tonight’s hearing by word of mouth.
 - The application states that the festival has been “previously approved by the Board of Supervisors.” This is false. No Special Event permit has ever been approved for this property. A similarly named festival was approved at entirely different property in Berryville, VA.
 - Correspondence from the Clarke County Sheriff and VDOT included in the application aside, the traffic issues created by this event will be overwhelming and dangerous to public safety. Tilthammer Mill Road is a two-lane country road which was never intended nor can it handle the volume of cars, trucks, RV’s and 18 wheel tractor trailers anticipated by this proposed event. More important, Tilthammer Mill Road has a significant downhill grade immediately before the property’s one and only entrance following the route to the property proposed in the application.
 - The only ingress and egress to the property is a one -lane gravel road. Not only does this create obvious traffic issues on Tilthammer Mill Road, the public safety issues are numerous and considerable. There is no dedicated ingress and egress for emergency vehicles and law enforcement. The possibility and probability for one or more catastrophic events is moderate to high. It is beyond my comprehension how the event planners expect to get over 3500 people out of the property on a one-lane road onto a two-lane country road in an emergency while attempting to simultaneously get emergency vehicles on to the property. There are multiple emergency exits on an airplane and multiple life boats on a cruise ship for good reason.
 - The impact to the environment would be significant. The noise and light pollution would be significant to this area of Clarke County, much of which is preserved by conservation easements and largely consists of land zoned as agricultural. Wildlife, including at least one federally protected Bald Eagle couple, which live along the stretch of the Shenandoah River will obviously be adversely affected. Inevitable trash and failure to use provided restroom facilities will lead to additional and unnecessary environmental and public health issues. Power generators and food trucks

will add to the environmental impact. Moreover, with the sale of alcoholic beverages for over 14 hours each day and thousands of campers on the property, it is obvious that the noise pollution issues will not end at midnight. And for those who are not overnighing, there is a high probability of participants driving while intoxicated on Clarke County roads. Not only is this a law enforcement issue, it is a public safety issue.

- o There are two wildlife rehabilitation centers within close proximity of the Niswander property. I have supported the Blue Ridge Wildlife Center for years. I do not want this very important regional rehabilitation center and its wildlife patients to be adversely affected by the noise and lights from the proposed events and from the overwhelming traffic on Tilthammer Mill Road.
- Finally, there are much more suitable alternatives to the Neiswander property. It is my understanding that this festival has been previously held at Watermelon Park in Berryville. Graves Mountain Farm and Lodge in Syria, VA hosts similar type and size events on their property and actively markets their facilities and campground to events like those promoted by Shepherds Ford Productions, LLC. I would be glad to personally introduce the applicants to the Graves family. The Graves Mountain—Shepherd Ford Productions partnership could be a perfect match.
- I join my neighbors who are present at tonight’s hearing or who have submitted statements in writing like mine in strong opposition to this application and urge the Board of Supervisors to reject the Special Events Permit application.

John White, Boyce

- I am writing to express concern about the proposed concert venue at Island Farm on Tilthammer Road in Millville, VA.
- I have recently purchased land at the tip of Calmes Neck. The reason I bought was the peace and quiet of land on the river. The notion of having a concert across the river runs counter to the very things that attracted me to the area.
- I realize that the proposal is for just a few weekends out of the year, but this feels like a slippery slope. Apparently, this landowner tried to open an illegal campground in the past and was stopped, (Thank you, by the way.) This feels like a means to slowly erode the peace and tranquility of the area incrementally, ala:

- 2021 - 2 big events
- 2022 - 5 big events
- 2023 - continual events
- The fact that this type of development is counter to zoning of the area, the desires of neighbors, and the apparent prior bad faith by the landowner leads me not to endorse this application nor trust that this is all that will be asked for. It feels like just the start.
- I request that you not give an inch this year, for fear it'll be a mile next year.

Katrin Helbing, Boyce

- As a part-time resident of Calmes Neck Estates, I am requesting the Board of Supervisors deny the large special event permit application for events at **1352 Tilthammer Mill Rd in Boyce and requested by Shepherds Ford Productions, LLC**. Shepherds Ford Productions has proposed at least 3, multi-day events (some up to 6 days) in 2021, with the intent to carry such events through the next several years. The events are expected to draw approximately 3,750 people for the purpose of multi-day music festivals.
- My family purchased a small cabin in Calmes Neck expressly for the purpose of enjoying the peace, serenity, and natural beauty along the Shenandoah River. My concern is that venues and events such as those proposed by Shepherds Ford Productions would destroy all that we cherish. The events would bring thousands of people, along with their tents, generators, equipment, trash, human waste, light pollution, and noise to what is now a pristine part of the state. The impact on the environment –both in the immediate area and down stream of the site – will be dreadful and irreparable.
- In addition, the event production company will have no method to control event attendees from ‘exploring’ the area beyond the concert venue. All adjoining property, and property along the river, is private property. I anticipate incidents of trespassing on private property along this stretch of the river to increase. Please deny the Shepherds Ford Productions application for the events at 1352Tilthammer Mill Rd.

Larry and Rossi Seltzer, Boyce

- We are writing to express our strong opposition to the application for events at 1352 Tilthammer Rd. in Boyce and requested by Shepherds Ford Productions. The land owner is Steve Neiswander.

- As landowners in Calmes Neck Estates, we do not believe the activities requested by the applicants are in any way appropriate for this property which is zoned Agricultural Open Space. It has been a working farm for decades, and as such is consistent with the rural agricultural uses along the Shenandoah River above and below the Route 50 bridge all the way to Locke’s Mill public boat launch. This stretch of River represents one of the last undeveloped, largely pristine stretches of the river below Front Royal and should not be permanently damaged by allowing any new large-scale commercial uses.
- The events suggested in the permit application would overwhelm the existing infrastructure and natural resources on the river. The events previously held at Watermelon Park, which is an appropriate venue for these types of activities because it has an established commercial footprint, well established ingress and egress, and sufficient electrical and sanitary facilities to support large-scale events, are not appropriate for the open, agricultural land at 1352 Tilthammer Rd, a narrow, scenic byway.
- The proposed events would attract thousands of people to an undeveloped area where there are no facilities, and no ability to control behaviors that might significantly and negatively affect nearby landowners, wildlife, and the river itself. There are several Bald Eagle nests in the near vicinity. These federally protected birds would be at real risk and any disturbances, especially during nesting and fledging periods, could be subject to litigation and significant financial penalties, including criminal proceedings.
- The current landowner has shown repeated, blatant disregard for following the necessary rules and regulations for land use in Clarke County and along the river. He operated an illegal commercial campground on his land all summer, with as many as ten different semi-permanent campsites in use. These illegal campgrounds each cleared areas from their campgrounds down to the river, removing vegetation and causing significant erosion during rain events. In spite of several warnings from County officials, the landowner did not end this illegal commercial use of his property until a formal cease and desist order was issued by the county.
- The proposed use of this property as a large-scale event site is inconsistent with current zoning, and inconsistent with all the efforts that Clarke County has put into protecting the rural, natural assets it has. We hope you will not permit this use, or any future non-agricultural commercial use, on this agricultural land.

Margaret Wester, Boyce

- I am writing to let you know that I am opposed to the permit to allow Island Farm to hold music festivals and camping. This would have a negative environmental impact on the river and all the surrounding properties. There is also the issues of noise and light pollution and sanitation issues when there is a large crowd of people. An event like this would negatively impact the beauty and serenity of this section of the Shenandoah River that all of us love and have come to appreciate as a unique stretch of the river that has been saved from development and excessive use like Watermelon Park and the camp lots across from it. There are other more appropriate venues for a music festival in Clarke County, like the Fair Grounds, that are already in place and designed for large public gatherings. So, I would like to add my voice to all of those who are opposed to this music festival and camping on Island Farm and ask that you vote against it.
- Thank you for your time and attention.

Richard Miller, Boyce

- I am opposed to approval of the special event application (Reference 1). My points and Questions are below.
- Point: The land in question is zoned AOC. The definition of AOC from the 2020 Clarke County Ordinance Code (page 3-1) is below (emphasis added):
 - 3-A-1 Agricultural-Open Space-Conservation District - AOC (6/13/89) (7/15/97) Intent: This district includes portions of the County that are located west of the Shenandoah River and that consist primarily of various open lands such as farms, fields, forests, parks, lakes and flood plains. The district is intended for agricultural, forestal, and low activity recreational and service uses that will facilitate the conservation and preservation of agricultural, forestal and open space lands; the protection of water and clean air sheds; the conservation of water and other natural and ecological resources; the reduction of soil erosion and flood and fire hazards; and the enhancement of the aesthetic value of the district as a whole.
- Questions: How can Clarke County consider the proposed event/activity with 3,500+ people to be “low activity”? How does this event/activity promote the conservation and preservation of agricultural, forestall, and open space land? How does this enhance the aesthetic value? Let me point out that the

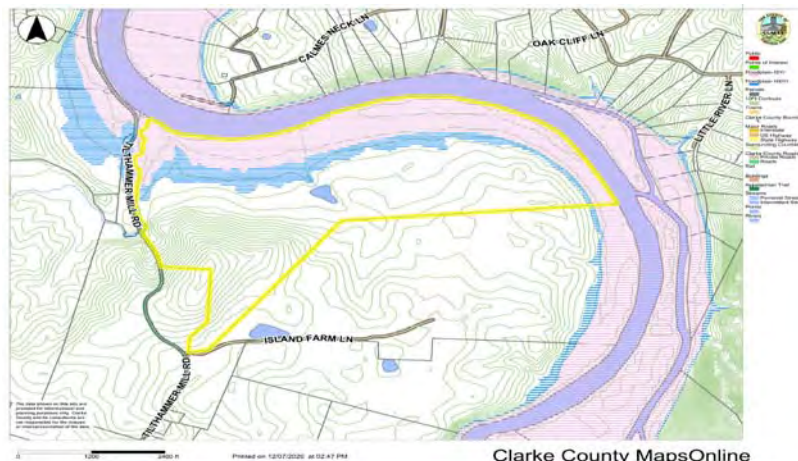
event/activity WILL NOT be a 3-day event for adjacent residents. There will be 14 days set up, 3 days event, and 7 days tear down. Each event is more like a 24- day event for impact.

- Point: In accordance with reference 2, Section 9, Page 1 (Definitions), I am considered a Clarke County taxpayer owner (Lots 43 (4065 Calmes Neck Lane) and Lot 42) that is adjacent to the proposed affected areas. My property line is approximately 200 feet from the proposed camping area in the application and my home is approximately 600 feet from the camping area on the Shenandoah Rivers edge.
 - "9-A-12 The word "adjacent" means "nearby" and not necessarily "contiguous," unless the obvious construction of the wording indicates otherwise."
- QUESTION: Adjacent property owners are to be notified of these applications. Why was I not notified?
- Point: The so-called Island Farm was just a few months ago called River Farm which attempted to run an unpermitted camp ground through Vrbo and other medium. (see attached Reference 3 for Clarke County Violation). Because of this experience we have first hand experience on how loud just approximately 65 people camping can be. It is suspicious that the Island Farm uses a different address than the River Farm, but has the same owner.
- Questions: Has Clarke County considered the noise impact to adjacent owners when considering that the permit is asking for multiple 15kw and 25kw generators running lights all night in the camp ground? If 65 campers are noisy, generators and hundreds of campers certainly will have an impact on being able to sleep with the windows opened, have an enjoyable outdoor meal on the deck, etc. Will approving Clarke County officials and Mr. Neiswander allow me to set-up 25 kw generators near their homes and allow them to run all night during these camping periods?
- General Question: Has Clarke County made an assessment on the legal and public relations costs for individual and class-action law suits should this be approved?

Robina Rich Bouffault, Boyce

- You have already heard quite a bit from me concerning this proposed SUP, so I will try to keep it short and sweet.
- The Entrance

- There is only one entrance/exit instead of the required two.
- It is narrow, one lane only. You cannot enter and exit at the same time.
- It is a farm entrance, not the commercial entrance that would be required for commercial trucks and other heavy vehicles, along with car traffic generated by cars belonging to 3,500+ people.
- The Access Road
 - Tilthammer Mill Road (Rt 621) is a narrow, winding secondary road that is designated a Scenic Byway by the Commonwealth Transportation Board, which is defined as being “within a protected scenic corridor located, designed, and constructed in a manner to preserve and enhance the natural beauty and cultural value of the countryside”. Only 16% of Clarke’s public roads are designated Scenic Byways.
- The River Banks and Floods
 - Almost the entire campgrounds shown in the application are located within the property’s ten-year flood plan. See the attached map showing the 10 and 100 year floodplains, along with the 10 ft. contours. Trash from the campgrounds will be regularly washed into the river when it floods, contaminating it even more.
 - Spout Run, one of the county’s impaired streams, runs along its’ western edge, and will also become more impaired with contaminated run-off.
- The Events
 - The multi-day events are six, not three days, as indicated in the application.
 - The number of people expected of 3,500+, plus organizers and vendors, would equate to having over 25% of Clarke’s entire population circulating on just one property.
- I strongly urge the Board of Supervisors to deny this application.



Sandra Bittner, Boyce

- As a resident of Calmes Neck I wish to join the others who are strongly begging you to consider that the effect an RV park/entertainment venue across the Shenandoah from our properties would be devastating. The noise factor (people in Calmes Neck can hear the music from the Watermelon Festival), the damage to the environment and in particular to the historic Shenandoah, the destruction of the view, the property value losses, the fact that people have moved to many places in Clarke County including Calmes Neck for the beauty and peace of the area.....these are all factors that should not allow this type of destruction to take place. We depend on our local government to protect us from such injustices.
- But I have a question: How can a property in a pristine agricultural/residential zone suddenly be allowed to become a commercial/entertainment property, particularly in an area that should be environmentally and historically protected? The damage done will be irrevocable and a stain upon the values that Clarke County professes, not the least of which is the County's admirable efforts on the conservation level.
- I am asking that the development of commercial property in this area or any area in Clarke County that is not appropriate for commercial development be banned. I would invite you to meet me on the ridge of Calmes Neck to view the property across the river that will be destroyed.

The following comments were sent in via email to County Administration but were not read due to time restraints.

Deirdre Coppage

- I am writing today to support Shepherds Ford Productions in their efforts to continue their excellent orchestration of live music events. I have attended many events organized by these fine people and was heartbroken when they announced that the Watermelon Festival would likely not be returning. For many of us(from various parts of the country too!),their music festivals are the only occasions that we meet up during the year and are thrilled to be able to camp together by the riverside while enjoying first class music as well as the beauty of the Virginia countryside. In my experience, the site has always been well maintained and the attendees always very respectful of the music, the

camping areas, and of each other. I sincerely ask that you consider their request for a permit to hold an event in the new location. We need Shepherds Ford to continue their work.

- Thank you attention to this matter.

Liz Monseur

- I am wring to ask that you please consider the request by Shepherds Ford Productions to hold two events in Clarke County, on the Shenandoah River in 2021. I have attended a number of past events at Watermelon Park and was impressed with the care that the organizers took to prevent environmental impact. These events were enjoyed by families, many of whom returned for several years. I strongly believe that SFP will do all in their power to conduct safe and orderly gatherings in a beautiful location that should be shared with the public.

Rebecca Sumption, Berryville

- My name is Rebecca Sumption, I reside at 107 Rosemont circle Berryville VA and I am here to voice my support for Shepherds Ford Productions special event permit. I know there have been several issues raised with holding these events at the new location.
- We as a community have held these events, especially the bluegrass festival for several decades, I feel it is a staple of Clarke Counties hospitality and culture.
- I know one big issue that has been raised would be the possibility of noise, disrupting local homeowners. I would like to assure you this isn't Coachella or Woodstock, the main events end by 11 with a dance tent after, attended by about 15% of the festival attendees, cutting down the "noise" dramatically, we are not a noisy disrupt group of people, we are enjoying bluegrass and each other, here you will not find loud, aggressive individuals, this is a community of families and individuals that have been attending for years, we want to be in nature and listen to music that isn't normally promoted. I am a light sleeper and am still able to be asleep by 11:30, so I fail to see how this would disturb surrounding households.
- Another issue that has been brought to my attention is "traffic". As I see on our maps, there are several different ways into the property entrance, and a main road leading directly to the property. A lot of us arrive early before the

music events officially start and stay the entire time, cutting down on the would be "traffic" or influx of cars. I don't see how this would be any different than when the events were held at watermelon park, where no additional traffic control was needed to be utilized by county resources. In my research I have also found that during their events LESS public safety resources are needed than at the Appalachian trail, which the county promotes for tourism, we/they tend to be a self-sustaining crowd, so why not promote their events for the county? I have met lifelong friends at these events and it is our one time a year that we can all be together, a lot of people come from out of town to enjoy these events and our county. We aren't talking about a permanent music venue in this situation.

- Shepherds ford recruits MANY volunteers who attend these events for trash pick up, ticket collection and general help. I have never left these events seeing trash anywhere on the premise. It would be a shame to deny us these festivals which have endured for years. I personally would love everyone who may have concerns to attend this year, even if just for a day or evening, day passes are normally available!
- These events bring revenue to our wonderful community and local businesses which I hope we all would love to promote, aren't we a county of openness and benevolence? I would like to think so and I would like to keep it that way. Thank you for your time and taking my statements into consideration, have a wonderful evening.

Adam Shellenberger, Warrenton

- I am writing to you to support the Shepherds Ford Productions request for an event permit. I have attended their events at the previous location and have been impressed by the quality event that they put on. Their events are family friendly and draw people from all over the region who enjoy unplugging from day to day stresses and spending time in nature listening to (primarily) bluegrass. The festivals also create a great sense of community as you are interacting with your camping neighbors for the weekend and stage neighbors for the various sets. One of the best examples of the community is seeing all the campground picking sessions, where people of all ages and skill levels are playing together and learning from each other often forming lasting relationships.

- I've been particularly impressed with the family friendliness of the previous Shepherds Ford Events. They have lots of activities throughout the weekend for kids of all ages and do a good job of promoting them to the attendees. One of my friends (whom I met at a festival) previously stated that the Watermelon Park was to be his family's yearly festival, as he, his wife and their three children (ages 10, 8 and 3) loved the intimate scale of the event, family vibe and activities available to them.
- I've never noticed a problem at the previous events with noise. The large stage ended at a reasonable time and the smaller stage was sited in a way that contained most of the sound on the property. One must remember that a majority of the acts play acoustic music, and that by nature (while amplified to the audience) should minimize the potential for noise disturbance amongst the neighbors. I myself tend to be a light sleeper and go to bed early (in a tent) and was never disturbed by noise.
- I should also point out that the typical attendees at these events tend to be environmentally conscious. I've never noticed an issue with trash or pollution at the previous events. The attendees are both self responsible and self policing which ensures that they won't leave the venue "trashed". I think it's important to remember that the attendees are living here for 3 - 4 days and want to have their temporary "home" as clean and nice as possible for them and their temporary "neighbors". Additionally, the attendees are aware that their time on the property is temporary and that they need to be respectful of the permanent residents/property owners near the event site.
- Lastly, I would point out that these events have the ability to generate spin off revenues for the County. Many attendees will choose to buy supplies as close as possible to the event site and stock up one last time before entering, others will choose to explore (and spend money at) the surrounding attractions, and others will choose to return to Clarke County to visit and explore outside of the events.
- I appreciate your careful deliberation on the event request and reading my thoughts. I hope that you will be able to see Shepherds Ford Productions as a positive member of the community and support their request.

Aly Kerby

- Hello, I'm emailing to add my support for Shepherd's Ford Productions to have their application for their river festival location approved. Having attended

many of their festivals I've always found the production to be responsible and environmentally conscious.

Amanda Carroll

- I and at least 10 of my friends have been to all the festivals held at watermelon park by Sheppard's Ford Productions throughout the years and would very much love if they could get a permit to do more gatherings in 2021 so please let us know what we need to do to make this happen!

Amy Gray, Stephens City

- Productions to have an approved permit for their festival in September 2021. I have attended this event since 2007J and every single year through 2019 except for 2015; so 12 years.
- It's a great fellowship of kind, respectful people. I hope you will grant a permit that will allow the event to continue.
- Thank you for your time and consideration.

Amy Shull

- I am writing on behalf of Shepherd's Ford Productions to encourage the Board's approval of their application to hold music festivals at the new location south of the original site. Having attended their festivals every year for the past seven years, I can personally attest to the responsible behavior and environmental care of not only Shepherd's Ford but also the festival attendees. These events are not the typical large-scale, drug-fueled millennial events; rather, they're supported by families and older, devoted music lovers who care about the environment, our county, and one another, and who leave the grounds better than they found them each year. We dearly missed the annual September event this year and appreciate Clarke County's consideration of other alternatives.

Anna Billman, Bluemont

- Please include this letter in favor of Shepherd's Ford's permit application for events at 1352 Tilthammer Mill Road in the minutes of the public hearing scheduled for December 15.

- I am writing to express my support of continuing a 16-year tradition of music and community in a small family-oriented music festival at the site referenced above.
- I understand there are concerns about use of this site, and it seems information has been shared that does not constitute an accurate representation of the intended use.
- This application for a permit for temporary overnight camping for two annual three-day events is not a request to alter zoning or change the land into a permanent campground.
- While the property is larger than the previous site of the festival, the attendance cap will stay the same. This is not a plan for a much bigger festival.
- The character of these events is community, environment, and family-oriented. I would argue that over the past ten years, my children have learned more about river and land stewardship and the concept of "leave no trace" at the annual Watermelon Park Festivals than they have on any other family adventures. There has always been a prominent presence of educators and organizations letting attendees know about our river ecosystems and ways to be good stewards of land and water. Shepherds Ford has partnered with and donated to multiple nonprofits that help to keep the river clean and spread awareness about conservation and responsible stewardship.
- Please know that many community members are in favor of this treasured tradition continuing.

April Pink

- Hello, I've heard that some folks are concerned about Shepherds Ford putting on a music festival in their backyard. I can definitely understand but the festivals that Shepherds Ford put on are family-friendly and always concerned about the land and surrounding communities. The average festival goer is over 40 (myself included). My family has been living and vacationing in the Shenandoah my entire life and we feel a personal connection to the land and the people. I know Shepherds Ford feels the same way and it shows in the events they produce. I hope you will welcome them for years to come.

No name given

- I am an avid fisherman and steward of the Shenandoah River. In previous events Sheppard Ford productions have had along the banks of the

Shenandoah have done nothing but help show the world what a fantastic resource the "Doah" is. I have meet many people from around the county at these events and all admire the beauty of the Shenandoah Valley. These events are a great resource to boost tourism to Clarke Co.

Bill McIntosh, Boyce

- I have lived in Clarke County for over 60 years and have attended many Watermelon Park festivals.
- Shepherds Ford has done a fabulous job curating these events for the last 16 years.
- I strongly encourage the county to approve the permit for these 3 events for sizes similar to their past events.
- However, I believe that more than 3 events would not be in the best interest of the county or the neighbors.

Bob Glover, Bluemont

- I just found out the deadline for letters about the new music venue is today. Therefore, please excuse this last minute letter and any potential mistakes.
- I am a life long supporter of bluegrass music and normally support Shepherd Ford Productions. However, I DO NOT support them a festival at this location for a variety of reasons some of which are listed below.
- I feel bad Watermelon Park is not supporting their concerts. I was hoping Shepherd Ford Productions would move the event to the CC Fairgrounds. This location came as a complete surprise. I really feel for the neighbors.
- Short list of reasons we do not support the proposed location:
 - This is not an established campground or event location. It should not go from a farm field to such a large music venue with the stroke of a pen. The Clarke County Fairgrounds have been long established event venue and are a much better option.
 - The road and driveway are not meant for this type of traffic. Watermelon Park has two different routes to access the location and several different gates. Once again, the CC Fairgrounds are a better location.
 - The number of people are going to far exceed the number at Watermelon Park. Watermelon park was large enough.
 - If it is approved please only approve it for one concert this year as an experiment.

- There is a pandemic. This seems like a very strange time to approve something that might have to be cancelled.
- This does not do much to help established Clarke County businesses. The previous location was closer to Berryville. Nalls and The Corner Store really benefitted from the event being at Watermelon Park. I just do not see any CC businesses benefiting in this location. know Waterloo and Millwood are relatively close but there is still a significant difference because folks coming from the east will not pass CC businesses like they do at Watermelon Park and the CC Fairgrounds.
- Two or three events in the first year is too much.
- I agree with the neighbors. They do not live at that location to have that many cars go by two or three times a year.
- This is the quiet rural place. I would be extremely upset (insert stronger word) if someone did this next to our land.
- For consistency, I do not like the location of Lollapalooza either. There should not be concerts at that location either.
- Have they looked at the CC Fairgrounds. I know it has shortcomings but nothing is perfect.
- As I said I support Shepherd Ford Productions and it is a shame that Watermelon Park pulled out of the concerts. That was a great location.
- Despite this the county and the neighbors should not have to deal with the negative impacts of such a concert in an area that cannot handle the crowd and does not have an established venue.

Bonn Poland, Martinsburg

- I'm writing to please ask for your support of Shepherds Ford Productions for events in 2021. As you know, the entertainment industry has taken a devastating hit in 2020. This includes musicians, food vendors, artists, tourism....the list of residual effects goes on and on. I'm asking for the Clarke County Board of Supervisors to please approve the permits filed by Shepherds Ford Productions so that we can resume the tradition of bluegrass music, artistry, food, and culture in the peaceful and friendly environment that they have created for many years in the past.

Brett Kretzer

- I am hoping you will consider reviewing and approving the permit for Shepherds Ford Productions to host the annual Watermelon Park Festival at their new location. This has been a very important community tradition that has maintained a responsible and respectable event that does not interfere w/ the surrounding neighbors and environment. Please allow this festival to continue by approving their application

Brian Strawhand

- I am writing to you on behalf of Shepherd's Ford Productions and the Watermelon Park Festival. I was a bit upset at hearing the new owners of Watermelon Park were no interested in hosting the festival after 16 years.
- I have been to many different music festivals, and Watermelon Park Festival is one of the best run, family friendly festivals I have ever attended. All of the festival attendees are very respectful of the site, of the music, and of each other. One of my favorite non-music attractions is the river. It's a wonderful way to enjoy nature in between music. I was very excited to hear they found a new location, and that it was on no a river!!
- I hope that Clarke County had a positive experience when they allowed the festival to use the Fairgrounds back in 2018, and hope that this relationship can stay strong for years to come!!

Bryant Condrey

- I'm a resident of Boyce and I just wanted to let y'all know that I fully support the county approving the use of land by the Shenandoah river for the Shepherd's Ford bluegrass festival. River festivals are a strong part of Clarke County history and culture and we should continue to encourage these where possible.

Caleb Smith

- I'm writing as a supporter of local business, culture, and the arts.
- Shepherd's Ford productions have orchestrated events over the last 16 years celebrating the rich musical culture of Appalachia by promoting nationally known and local artists in conjunction with Watermelon Park. During those 16 years, a community developed surrounding these "can't miss" musical celebrations where folks from all walks of life, who rarely see each other outside of these events, look forward to enjoying one another's company for

what always seems to be too brief a time-with many attendees driving into the commonwealth from out of state. Although it became clear our beloved tradition was going to be yet another casualty of Covid this year, the community was equally shocked to learn of the dissolution of the relationship between the park and Shepherds Ford. Although I cannot speak directly to what led up to that dissolution, I can attest as both participant and volunteer, the event is well-maintained and orderly. Seniors, families with children, and everyone in between participate in these events - I've brought children myself. When I refer to community, I really mean it.

- Apart from a "family" of attendees, there are a number of vendors who would also suffer a lost opportunity for recovery should two of their most profitable events be cancelled for yet another year.
- Lastly, I understand the pressure the board faces from their constituents but, while the "not in my backyard" crowd is a vocal one, it is also a minority. To be honest, I was myself personally- looking to acquire a property suitable to host these folks until my accountant made me sideline the idea for the time being. I think the neighbors concerned with any potential inconvenience may be doing themselves a disservice by denying themselves the opportunity to become part of something much larger than themselves. If anything, let them experience it once. They'll either love it and you'll never hear from them again or they'll petition you again in the future and things can be reassessed. Over the years, Shepherds Ford has partnered with and donated to multiple non-profits which promote conservation and river stewardship, including Friends of the Shenandoah River, Piedmont Environmental Council, Shenandoah River Keepers, and the Downstream Project. These groups are often represented at the events and events typically offer education on the subject.
- Thankfully, 2020 is drawing to a close and vaccines are on their way. People have had every conceivable trip, concert, cruise, and outing cancelled. No one's been able to do anything social without some sense of dread. Small businesses are suffering. Musicians and artists of all types are suffering. If it becomes safe to do so by mid-2021 I couldn't think of a better way to get back to 'normal' than by attending a bluegrass music festival with a bunch of old friends. If for whatever reason the subject permit applications are not approved, I would like to humbly urge you to work with the applicant to find a suitable alternate location - even if it's temporary. In light of the circumstance, people need some hope and something to look forward to.

- Thank you for your time and consideration regarding this matter; your support is appreciated.

Carla Kasun, Rockville, Maryland

- I am writing about The Watermelon Park Festival, and The River and Roots Festival.
- I am an experienced concert goer, and I attend as many as 10 music festivals a year. WPF is my second favorite festival. Why? Because it's about connecting with my musical family, with the music being the glue. While this may be true of all festivals, other, larger, festivals have negative elements that WPF and R&R never has. Sure, there's a bit of letting loose and drinking. But you will never see drug abuse or fighting. What you will see is families. There are tons of kids and their parents cooking food for friends and strangers. You will see people taking care of each other. You will see musicians playing together around every corner, inadvertently preserving traditional music of this area. You will see love between people in a way I can barely describe. You will see people taking care of the Earth, including respecting the festival area.
- Shepherd's Ford Productions create events that are unique and magical. Any venue would be lucky to host an event held by these dedicated and benevolent folks.

Charles Billman, Bluemont

- I wanted to share with those considering this application for a Permit some details that I fear may have been misrepresented to the community at large by a local property owner. Shepherds Ford is not applying to trying to change zoning at the Island farm property. Instead, they are simply applying for a temporary event permit for three annual three-day events.
- Equally, they are not trying to change the land use to that of a campground. Instead, they are simply applying for three annual, three day events that will allow overnight camping for the limited and exclusive purpose of camping at these annual three-day events.
- Further, as the permit will state with clarity, the event will max out at 3,500 tickets, after which the event will be “sold out; and no additional tickets will be issued. This is the same number of tickets that were issued at the prior event on only 27 acres - a much smaller property.

- Additionally, Shepherds Ford Productions has partnered with and donated to multiple non-profits that help to keep the Shenandoah river clean and spread awareness (including education at the events) about conservation and land and river stewardship. These organizations include Friends of the Shenandoah River, Piedmont Environmental Council, Shenandoah River keeper, and The Downstream Project.
- Finally, I want to add that I have been attending this event with my children for over ten years, and bring them back with certainty each year that the event is well maintained, with adequate security and a population of “guests” that respects each other and the land. In fact, it has become a family event for many of our friends who also have young children (not so young anymore). This event sells out (3,500 tickets) each year because it is so well organized and maintained, with good music and family friendly environment.

Chris Martin, Loudoun

- I'd like to voice my favor for the recent Shepherd's Ford Permit Application for events at 1352 Tilthammer Mill. Rd and it be included in the minutes for the December 15th public hearing.
- The discontinuation of the annual Watermelon Park Festival was a business decision made by the owners of the Watermelon Park Campground. However, the organizers and patrons of the festival wish to continue the 60 year cultural tradition and believe they have found a suitable location to hold the festival in 2021. This festival is a significant cultural, musical event that promotes the arts, music, fellowship and small business in Clarke County, Virginia. Please help to continue the tradition.

Chris Wood, Waterford, Virginia

- I'm writing to ask you to support the application for this riverside bluegrass event. As a parent of two young musician's, the former Watermelon Park fest provided the only truly family-friendly music and camping event of its kind. Its modest scale, friendly/casual atmosphere, and multiple music workshops geared to musicians of all abilities made it our one go-to multi-day event of the summer. We miss it terribly and hope you will give it a home to return in 2021.

Christine Rankin

- I am writing to persuade the Clarke County Board of Supervisors to approve two 3 day festivals with Shepherd's Ford Productions. As a native Clarke County resident and longtime festival supporter these festivals are not only beneficial to the economic support of Clarke County they also seek to uphold conservation efforts of the Shenandoah River. The events proposed by Shepherd's Ford Productions have consistently been respectful of environmental standards. The event staff, organizers and participants have been environmental stewards of the Shenandoah River as well as the property in which the festival has been held. These events draw local and regional support with respectful attendees. Please consider the continuing support of this much needed event in our community.

Christopher Slabinski, Berryville

- My name is Christopher Slabinski. I am submitting my name and support in hope's you can endorse a music event permit to be submitted by Shepherds Ford Productions.
- I have been a resident of Berryville and Clarke County since 2000. I am 52 years old. Due to my job relocation, I moved put of PA and into rural Virginia, specifically Berryville for many reasons. Mainly for the rural surroundings and its quaint neighborhoods. The County's outdoor environment was a gift from God.
- I fell in love with a main attraction to me right away, called the Shenandoah River. I love fishing, outdoors, canoeing and music. Since 2004, I have attended the Watermelon Park Music Festival. It's organization, land owners and promoters have continually hosted an annual traditional. Each year I looked forward to reunite with my extended WPMF family. It was my favorite week on the calendar every year. I always circled the September week and reserved annual leave with my employer a full year out, so I could guarantee my presence to the WPMF.
- As you know, it was cancelled by its land owners after last year. I was so saddened. So many festival attendees felt devastated. My heart was ripped out and broken even to this day.
- So, I want to show my support to grant this events music permits to Shepherds Ford Productions. I can soundly say that all festival attendees would personally reach out to all local land owners to listen to and address their concerns. My belief is the very same attendees would make efforts to protect, preserve and

even assist the land owners if any damage would occur to the environment. These festival attendees need this event back along the Shenandoah River.

- A generation of children have been born because of this gathering. It's a beautiful event. Please consider. Thank you very very much!!

Chuck Doyle

- My name is Chuck Doyle and I would like to recommend that you approve the permits that Shepard's Ford has submitted for events in 2021.
- We have been going to Watermelon Park for many years and need a new home. These events can bring significant positive economic impact to your county by having out of county traffic bring funds to support local businesses which are in critical need right now.
- I have only met hard working, polite, and joyful attendees and musicians at their events and these would be no different.
- We are a community and care for the community we inhabit for a few days at a time. My camp lives by the rule of leaving it nicer than we found it, as an example we clean about a mile of riverside over a day or two while we were at Watermelon Park.
- Please consider approving their requests, you will be impressed by the relationship you could build for your community that will last for years to come.

Colleen & Rick Bergeron

- I understand that Shepherds Ford Productions is working with you regarding a permit for a 3-day festival on the Potomac River. My husband and I are in our late 60's and have been attending SFP's Watermelon Park Festivals for over a decade. For what it's worth we'd like to assure you that the SFP organization and the festival attendees are very appreciative and conscientious of the value of the natural resources - the river, trees, grassy areas - that temporarily make up the festivals' home for a few lovely days in the fall. The festival has always been a very family-oriented event with small children making watermelon boats, and parents and grandparents like us enjoying beautiful bluegrass music. I can assure you we are a rule-following, lights-out-at-11 pm bunch. The festival draws renowned bluegrass musicians and has been sponsored by the Virginia Tourism Authority among others. It is really a first-class event.

- We hope you will give Shepherds Ford Productions a chance by approving a festival permit for 2021. Thank you for your consideration.

Constance Wyant

- Please recognize that Shepard's Ford have been wonderful stewards of the Shenandoah River and the land surrounding it. My family and I have attended the River and Roots Music Festival as well as Watermelon Park. Each year we were very impressed with how they upheld the rules that were posted. The expectations were to clean the areas and only leave footprints. There were sessions about learning about the river and how best to care for this beautiful resource. People respected the property. It was family friendly. It's a loving community.
- Please consider having the festivals on the grounds proposed.

Coralyn Holter

- As an annual participant of the festivals held just North of the newly proposed site, I can attest to the measures Shepherds Ford Productions has implemented in years past to maintain social order, clean grounds+ waterway during any aforementioned event. The focus of these events being live music noise levels through the weekends may be more difficult to negotiate.
- As these events attract many out of town visitors, I believe it to be in the best interest of town and county commerce to support Shepherds Ford in their latest venture.

Dan & Roberta Bernhard

- Greetings, we have attended 5 events by Shepherds Ford Productions on the Shenandoah river and they have always been caring stewards of the environment and the neighbors. Please allow them to hold the music festival. It's a long tradition of our area's music, natural beauty and wonderful people.
- Thankyou!

Dana Geller

- I have been attending the Shepherd Ford Production of the Watermelon Festival for years. The reason I love it is that it is a family event. It is something we look forward to every year and were very upset to find out that

Watermelon Park was not having the festival. I love coming to Clarke County because my grandmother (Virginia Carlisle) lived in Berryville and my mother grew up there as well. I love returning to Clarke County every year for this event.

- I have never seen anyone throwing trash in the river. If anything the emphasis is on keeping the river clean as well as the campsite. It is a very peaceful, wonderful event that I hope you will consider keep in Clarke County.

Danielle Wohlgemuth

- I would like to share my support for the Watermelon Music Festival permits in Clarke County. I have been a patron of this event for 9 years and it is always the shining example of a responsible and worthy community gathering. I have always been impressed by the professionalism of the organizers and wonderful talented musicians who draw such a good group of frequenters. It would be a real loss if this festival could not continue to fuel the community of music and arts lovers of the tristate area. Please include my thoughts in the December 15 meeting minutes.

David Mann

- I am writing this letter in regards to the wonderful festivals that SFP hosts twice a year. The recent separation of the campground with the production company have left many of us confused and missing each others company. We hope that you can understand the influx of emails from all of the concerned patrons of the festivals. We have received emails notifying us that they have possibly found a new place to have their wonderful festivals, asking us to inform you how well run and respectful these festivals are. The Shepherds Ford Production company is a wonderful and well thought of company, that also is educational and a strong supporter of your community. We understand the concern of the locals and want them to know that everyone who participates, by either volunteering or simply attending for the love of the atmosphere and music are also a fine group of people. Shepherds Ford has always had a handle on the type of music and the understanding of the local curfew. Thank you for your time, patience and understanding that we care deeply for each other, your community, the local towns and the river at which is of utmost importance.

David Oberrieth

- I'm in favor of Shepherds Ford's Permit application be awarded for events at 1352 Tilthammer Mill Rd. be included in the minutes for the December 15 public hearing

Dena Kilgore, Alexandria

- I am writing in support of a permit for Shepherds Ford Productions to host events in Clarke County in 2021. We have been attending events hosted by Shepherds Ford since 2009, usually more than one per year. We think of them as "family reunions," with the family we have cultivated among this community, as well as our own growing families over the years. We appreciate this family-friendly atmosphere, the respect for the Shenandoah and protection of the watershed, and being able to celebrate our beautiful state, camping with friends, appreciating acoustic music and generally sharing a community. We have three sons who have basically grown up playing along the Shenandoah with friends, as we've watched them all grow together. We actually camped with my youngest son at a Shepherds Ford event at two months old.
- I cannot understate the significance of these events in deepening our respect for cultural traditions and appreciation for our countryside. Living in Alexandria, VA, we greatly revere the ability to experience a slower and simpler pace. We are boaters and believe strongly in keeping our rivers clean, as well as We are happy to bring revenue to local businesses, stopping for provisions at farmers markets and grabbing lunch while in Clarke County.
- Please provide this permit to bring continued celebration of the natural beauty of the area and the warm family community that Shepherds Ford Productions nurtures.
- Thank you for your consideration.

Diana Ezerins, Falls Church

- This is a note in support of the Shepherd's Ford music producing team.
- It's been a stressful year of disconnection and loss. We know the winter will be stressful. Whether you believe in the pandemic or not, your life has not been the same as a result.

- We know we can look forward to the spring and summer. The outdoors and music are two of the most healing gifts and experiences in our lives.
- The Shepherd's Ford community will take care of the space and each other. They will bring resources to the region. They will leave the area around the river better than they found it.
- People will fish and swim and grill. Children will play. Friends will gather. Instruments will be strummed. We will sing together. My eyes are tearing up imagining it.
- Please grant them the permission to host this annual festival. Please give us all something to which we can look forward in 2021.
- We will not let you down.

Donna McCann

- My husband and I have been going to the festivals for the last 6 years. It is well run and good clean fun. We come from NJ and meet our friends from NY Maine there. We have met great people from the area and now we meet them there too. Here's hoping for another year in your great state!

Dwayne Brooke

- I'm writing to express my hopes for permit approval for events by Shepherds Ford Productions at 1352 Tilthammer Mill Road on December 15. The previous events held by Shepherds Ford Productions have had an incalculably positive influence on our community. Thanks for considering this permit for approval.

Edmund Zduoba, Boyce

- We are writing to you in regards to the proposed Island Farm proposal. We understand there is a public meeting this Tuesday 12/15 but with Covid, we are reluctant to attend. Rest assured, if no COVID, we would definitely attend.
- I and my wife are **adamantly: opposed** to any "development" **PERIOD**. This appears to be portrayed as a responsible group hosting a "few" gatherings. This is just plain nonsense. We have resided in Clarke County for 22 years, having raised our family (son and daughter) through the Clarke County School system and all the myriad events that comprise that timespan.
- My wife and I just recently purchased a lot with a house in Calmes Neck (we moved from within Clarke). Our new 'home' in Calmes Neck is basically

opposite Island Events proposed location. This is supposed to be our retirement location. We chose to stay in the county as we have enjoyed living here. It's unique for its rural lands, wildlife and pristine landscapes (and history). My wife in fact is a Master Naturalist.

- **We would never have purchased** if we had any inkling of them proposing their concept. We are sorry they lost Watermelon Park and as such the festival. But their proposed new venue location is zoned rural and must stay so. It is foolish and naive for them or anyone to believe that hosting events up to 3,500 people will not have an environmental negative impact on the Shenandoah river. 3,500 people (for now) with the ensuing car traffic, damage caused by said traffic, septic, generators, trash, NOISE and so forth is not what Clarke County has steadfastly fought against all these years.
- If they steadfastly believe that this will "increase property values" and have no impact to anyone, then I propose they move their events to Long Branch?. No, I don't think so!! Perhaps the County could entertain that they use the County Fairgrounds three times a year would be a more realistic proposal as they have held events there in the past. The Showgrounds are a suitable venue to hold their music events. BUT NOT where they wish to do it now.
- As you know they have already destroyed large areas of protected riparian river banks building 5 illegal access points for their camping business this past summer. The fact that they tried to do this vividly shows their motives. Thankfully, that venture (so far) has been negated. They do not merely want three events a year-that's nonsense .. if approved, they will proceed with campgrounds, RV's and so forth. This is a money making venture, nothing more, nothing less.

Emily Ford

- Good afternoon, I write to you to share my support of the shepherds forward productions Request to hold events at a new site along the Shenandoah River. Over the years I have volunteered at Watermelon Park festival and river and roots festival. I volunteered as part of the festival activities to help with river clean up, recycling, river ecosystem education. As do the festival organizers.
- Thank you for your consideration.

Eric Parsell, Bluemont

- Please include this letter in favor of the Shepherds Ford Productions permit application for events at 1352 Tilthammer Mill Rd, to be included in the minutes for the December 15 public hearing.
- I would respectfully like to speak out in favor of allowing Shepherds Ford Productions to have a permit for events located at 1352 Tilthammer Mill Rd. I live across the river from the park that used to host the festival. I have never had reason to complain. The festival attendees have always been respectful.)
- The Watermelon Park Festival is a historic, small, family oriented yearly event that supports national and local bluegrass music. The festival (that feels more like a family reunion) not only brings our cultural Appalachian and bluegrass music to the forefront, but it also works with many non-profit organizations that focus on keeping the river clean and spreading awareness about conservation and land and river stewardship. Over the years, The River and Roots Festival and The Watermelon Park Festival have donated money to several local organizations, including Friends of the Shenandoah River, Piedmont Environmental Council, Shenandoah River keepers and The Downstream Project. Protecting the Shenandoah, the land and our surrounding community is important to not only Shepherds Ford Productions, but all the festival goers. In order to ensure that the festival does not overwhelm the land, there will be a cap on the amount of tickets sold. This is not a wild, free for all festival. We care about our environment and our community.
- (I think it is also important to remember that they are not asking to turn this land into a campground and they are not asking for rezoning, just a temporary event permit for two annual three day events.)
- As a resident of Clarke County, I respectfully ask that you approve Shepherds Ford Productions permit application.

Eric Strahs and family

- My wife and I are both business owners in Bon Air, Virginia and have been joyfully attending various events hosted by Shepherds Ford for almost ten years now. We have always taken our two kids, and most recently (when allowed) our loving pup too. Our most favorite event of the year has always been Watermelon Park Bluegrass Festival. Part of what makes this event so special to us is the location along the beautiful Shenandoah river. Such a magical place.

- One of the most truly wonderful things about this festival in particular, is the fan base. I can honestly say that of all the festivals I have been to, the attendees of Watermelon are amongst the friendliest, honest, and earth loving music loving people loving souls I have had the pleasure of living amongst for 3-4 days.
- I wanted to pass this experience along to you, as I understand Shepherds is in process of solidifying a location for 2021 ... and with such a tough time in 2020 ... I know I can speak for the thousands of folks I described above ... we need this to happen.
- Please consider my families experience, and know that you will be welcoming kind stewards of this planet, and will treat Clarke County with equal respect as we all do with our own homes.
- With optimistic faith and respect.

Erika Weshinsky

- I am writing to urge you to permit Shepherds Ford Production to hold their biannual festivals on the Shenandoah River in Clarke County.
- My family and I have attended the Watermelon Park Festivals for the 16 or so years since they began. They have always promoted keeping the river and environment clean. They have been conscientious of their neighbors by having music on the stage stop at an agreed upon time. They have run these festivals smoothly for many years and have come up with systems to keep it safe and clean.
- My kids look forward to these festivals as much as Christmas. It was sorely missed this year and we are hoping the annual traditions will continue next year once the pandemic is under control.

Evan Sands

- This email is to encourage you to approve a permit for Shepherds Ford
- bluegrass events next year.
- As a long time resident of the DC Northern Virginia area and a lifelong bluegrass fan and musician , I am impressed with all the Shepherds Ford events I've attended. They attract fans from a wide geographic area, and they manage traffic flow, waste, parking and concessions very well. I have been there on the last day of festivals and was equally impressed with post festival cleanup. I've also found that the stage show volume has consistently been managed to

balance the needs of the immediate audience with the folks in camping areas (and by extension, any nearby neighbors). Bluegrass festival goers are generally very respectful of grounds maintenance and environmental impact. In the Watermelon Park and River and Roots festivals, the river and the banks remained free of trash.

- To summarize, these festivals have meant a great deal to fans far and wide, and a great number of people will be grateful to have this tradition continue.

No Name Given

- I understand concern about any new event in your community.
- I wanted to pass along my experience with the past years watermelon Park events they held for music festivals. the past 5 + years I've attended and it is well organized and a great relaxing place to be. I'm hoping they will be able to hold the events on your site this year, for me it is something I look forward to every year.

Cliff and Maureen Uney; Glasgow, Scotland

- We are writing from Glasgow, Scotland in support of Shepherd's Ford Productions' application to hold events on the Shenandoah River in 2021.
- We been frequent visitors to the Watermelon Park Fest they have organized and had it not been for Covid19 we would have attended the event they had planned for this year ..
- We have attended many music festivals over the years, but Watermelon Park was in many ways our favorite. Very friendly, well organized and ecologically sound in the most beautiful setting.
- We would urge you to give a positive response to their current application. They can only bring goodwill and good music to Clarke County.

Gregory Young, Warren County

- The 16 year tradition of music festivals in Clarke County along the wonderful Shenandoah river must be allowed to continue. With Watermelon Park becoming an RV park it is necessary to find an alternate location. I understand the concerns of the neighbors but the promoter, the patrons and the acts are some of the nicest people in the world. I am sure that neighbor concerns can be accommodated. I urge you to at least approve next years permits to allow an opportunity to see if the festival is in fact disturbing to neighbors.

- Thank you for your consideration.

Hattie Lehman; Pittsburg, PA

- I have attended the Watermelon Park Festival for nine years and have attended music festivals throughout the United States. The attendees of Watermelon Park Festival are like no other -- they are considerate, know how to use trash cans, and overall just want to have a relaxing get-away by the Shenandoah.
- Please support Shepherds Ford Productions festivals in the future.

Heather Marsh

- Please consider the great positive impact of these events for the local community and anyone associated with these fine sponsors and local citizenry..
- They provide many events all year long that support local and non local causes..
- preserving the land and river frontage for generations to come and enjoy....
- Please grant them the ability to continue to doing so for years to come

Howard Runge; Boyce

- I am a home owner for over 15 years at 1307 Calmes Neck Lane in Boyce, located on the mountain ridge just above the subject property. I strongly oppose the application for a series of events for this subject property and any other future applications to hold commercial operations or events. My understanding is that this location is zoned by Clarke County for agricultural open space conservation only. I believe it is very important for Clarke County to maintain this existing zoning, and not approve usage permits and/or zoning changes that would allow:
 - camping and outdoor concerts with hundreds, and perhaps thousands of people
 - damage to the adjacent Shenandoah river bank of people entering the river over the soft river embankments
 - noise and sound pollution due to this large number of campers and festival attendees,
 - pollution of the river from camping area water run off and discarded waste from the campers

- Light pollution from a large camp ground area (side note: the covenants and restrictions on our residential property prohibit direct outdoor lighting to avoid "light pollution")
- High concentrated traffic volumes on roads sized and speed rated for low volume rural use
- Water demands to support such a large number of people
- Sewage and trash disposal requirements for a very large number of people
- Erosion in adjacent property values that are significantly enhanced by the existing rural character and protected by the adjacent rural zoning requirements.
- Significant additional demands on Clarke County's limited resources for public services such as police, emergency medical, fire department, building inspectors and health inspectors.
- No obvious plan for sufficient additional tax revenue coming in from this property to offset these additional demands on Clarke County resources.
- In the past the farm has already tried to operate an illegal commercial campground and was warned by Clarke County to cease and desist. They had a total of 10 nightly rental campers on the grounds. Even with only 10 campers the noise level was audible across Calmes Neck and went well into the night. The owner did not shut down voluntarily, he shut down with a cease and desist order from Clarke County. He openly advertised with a website about the commercial campground with no permits to run such a business. There was no regulation on sanitation or waste disposal and to this day we do not know where the sewage from 10 campers was disposed of.
- I strongly encourage the Clarke County Board of Supervisors and/or the authorized Clarke County land use zoning approval authorities to reject this application for events at 1352 Tilthammer Mill Road in Boyce VA. This is important to maintain the existing legal zoned rural character of the area and to preserve that for the legal residents of Clarke County, like myself and my community neighbors in Calmes Neck Estates, who purchased our adjacent properties to enjoy and preserve the peace and tranquility of that rural character.
- The requested location is the wrong location for a major camping and outdoor concert event Area.

Jackie Kosbob

- Please consider allowing Shepherds Ford to use the site along the Shenandoah River for their music festivals. I have been attending the Watermelon Park festival for many years with my children and grandchildren. We have always been very respectful of the environment as we have enjoyed the river. We have left our sites as clean or cleaner than we found them. We are typical attendees who would love to see these festivals remain in Clarke county.
- Thank you for your consideration.

James Turnage

- I've attended many Watermelon Park festivals put on by Shepherds Ford Production and have enjoyed them. They have been bluegrass festivals and tend to be fairly mellow affairs for fans of all ages. Heck, one year they had Loretta Lynn and was well attended by fans of her generation. As far as environmental impact, one year they had a seminar on waste being thrown in the river, explaining how aluminum cans get twisted up so you are left with disks from the top and bottom of the can (or maybe just the top), along with other spent an hour scouring the river for trash and pulled about half a bag full.
- This is not the crowd some people think it is, more the hike/bike/ecology ethos folks that like string bands.

James Walsh

- I've been going to watermelon Park for the last 15 years and I see no reason why you should have a problem with them having a thing there we are all well-behaved would love to have another Festival thank you I hope you consider them for this.

Jan Scopel

- Just wanted to say that I've been sponsoring music and dance festivals and going to music festivals for over 35 years now and the Shepherd Ford Folks-management, staff and volunteers are top notch in every category. Community created on their kind of family oriented activities and music have become a savory tradition again every summer and fall in Clarke County. Please don't lose them. Their whole focus is minimizing environmental impact in a safe and healthy way while providing amazing national and lots of

seriously excellent LOCAL talent. Many jurisdictions would PAY to have a group like Shepherd's Ford Productions to produce a festival like this.

- Just thought you'd want to know.
- Hope you have a safe and fun Holiday season.

Janet Emma Garbe

- I am writing in support of one of the most wonderful, respectful gatherings in our area that I've attended most of the last 16 years. Devastating to such an enormous arts & music community who support sustaining the healthy Shenandoah River when Watermelon Park ceased to allow the fest to continue on their grounds. Troves of us have been keeping the faith that the dedicated & talented Shepherd's Ford team would surely fall into the perfect next location for 2021 Watermelon PICKERS Fest & River & Roots. We could not be more excited about Tilthammer Mill Rd.
- If you've ever been a part of WPF, you know the heart & soul of our Blue Ridge Mountain Valley & River that are poured into this yearly & twice yearly event since River & Roots began. Many of us in the area LIVE for these two long weekends of the year, and the fest is wholly supported, attended & treasured by national & international attendees who spend the money & make the trek & gather in peace, camaraderie, music & arts for all ages at this beloved Festival. It's a GATHERING of GOODNESS. So much goodness!
- I know the property, as a realtor, and am told that some of the concerns are that another permanent camp site will spring up. I believe this is untrue and not part of the plan. This is a group that will leave it better than they found it, only bringing joy for the few days & becoming forever stewards of just another gem of a spot along the river. Please allow Shepherd's Ford to obtain the permits necessary to rehome & reestablish this BELOVED event. I can't imagine a better location. I realize there are new owners as of January 2020. For anyone who does not know the spot, here's a link. <https://link.edgepilot.com/s/aad2fefe/-lcXGzrtAkSzz414gTz21A?u=https://matrix.brightmls.com/Matrix/PublidPortal.asp-x?ID=18211693952>
- I, for one, am committed to not only supporting keeping this treasure going, but to the use of it to edify & educate future naturalists, outdoor & river enthusiasts, homegrown Appalachian Music to include the VAST talent in our own area, and the simple & joyful gathering that Watermelon Pickers Fest is

KNOWN to be. And it truly is open to folks from all walks of life. A heart expanding experience & a community treasure!

- I am in support of approving the permit Shepherds Ford PH 220=06. I am a land/homeowner at 32668 Mount Weather Rd, not far away, and am very protective of our lands, trails, rivers & community. This one matters a LOT to a lot of people who have the most professional systems nailed down for how to run it from pre show to no sign it ever happened. Shepherds Ford can be trusted to accomplish continued greatness here.
- How else may we help or raise our voices?
- Richest Blessings, and hopeful to learn ifs in our near future at Tilthammer Mill Rd. There are tribes of us willing to volunteer to see to the stewardship of the land, river & sky.
- Thank you for your consideration & efforts to this end. Please join us once it's on the books. It is NOT to be missed.
- Most sincerely.

Jason Fowler; Courtland, VA

- I have attended the Watermelon Park Festival in Berryville for over 10 years. The staff have been very responsible and environmentally friendly. I have never experienced any violence or seen any environmental damage at any of the 10+ events I have attended. You should have no reservations about allowing this group to hold a similar event in Clarke County.

Jason Tyler; West Virginia

- I'm writing in hopes, like many others, that you will include my thoughts in the December 15th meeting minutes.
- Myself, representing 95.9 The Big Dawg have attended Watermelon Park Fest in Berryville for many years. I can tell you that every event I've attended was full of some of the most friendly, thoughtful people you'd ever like to know. This event, year in and out, brings families and friends together from all over the country to celebrate music, togetherness and each other. We clean up after ourselves and treat everyone and everything around us with the respect it deserves. Will it be a quiet event? Well, it certainly isn't a heavy metal event. There will be amplified acoustic instruments being played masterfully and people dancing and laughing all weekend. Will we all go to sleep at 11 pm?

Not likely. But most of us will keep our clothes on and keep contained with our friends at our campsites.

- Watermelon Park Festival, its producers, its musicians and its attendees appreciate your consideration for us to continue this amazing event

Jed Barker

- I can't speak for music festivals in general, but the people who love and attend bluegrass festivals are a very eco-friendly lot. As for the music being loud, one of the things I love about bluegrass is the general lack of drums. No big bass drum thumping rhythm.
- I've volunteered at various bluegrass festivals in the past. I generally work cleanup crew. People throw trash in the bins. They even complain if you don't have enough recycling bins. When the campers break camp, the only thing left is some flattened grass. It's often hard to find trash to pickup when we break camp.
- This festival has been a wonderful opportunity to showcase new and seasoned talent. It's a way for parents and grandparents to bring the love of music to their families. The people camping and attending these festivals know they are just borrowing the land for a weekend. They do this not only because it's the right thing to do, but they know that if they don't take care of the land and if they abuse the property, they might not be coming back.
- I encourage you to check with other festivals such as Greyfox who have been on the same property for many years, and find out what the before and after condition of the land is.
- Please email me if you have any questions or would like additional information.

Jeff Moody; Ashburn, VA

- It is my understanding that Shepherds Ford Productions has applied for a permit in Clarke County to host two 3-day events in 2021; however, some people living near the proposed site are concerned that the event might be too loud and may negatively impact the environment.
- I am 64 years old, recently retired and thoroughly enjoyed attending the Watermelon Fest a couple times and the River and Roots festival in the Spring once. I purchased an early bird ticket and was disappointed when the September 2019 Watermelon Fest was cancelled due to Covid19; however,

was shocked when I heard that Watermelon Park would no longer be the festival's home.

- As to the concern that the event may be loud, one of the great things about Bluegrass music is that it is not loud and you can still carry on a conversation while listening to it. The river has been a focal point of the Festival, as evidenced by the Watermelon Boat races, and it always seemed to me that the shepherds Ford team is dedicated to protecting the river.
- Hoping and praying that the Clarke County Board of Supervisors support shepherds Ford Productions request.

Jeff Patterson

- Please allow this to take place there is no greater time than bounding with strangers through music.

Jeffrey Yuhasse; Linden, VA

- It has been brought to my attention that Shepherds Ford Productions has applied for a permit to hold two 3 day events on the Shenandoah. They have advised that Some folks living near the site are concerned that our event may be too loud and impact the environment negatively.
- I wanted to share my opinions. I have attended the Watermelon Park festival and River and Roots festivals for many years that Shepherds Ford Productions has put on at Watermelon Park campground. As you may be aware this is one of the longest running bluegrass festivals in the US. I regularly attend other music festivals. I can say with 100% certainty that Shepherds Ford hosts the most family friendly event I have attended. They are very considerate of the environment and go to great lengths to minimize any impact on the river or surrounding areas.
- It was a great disappointment when we found after this years Watermelon Park festival was canceled due to Covid-19 that the Watermelon park campground chose to stop partnering with Shepherds Ford productions.
- I hope you will chose to approve their permit request. I am positive this is the right decision.
- Thank you for your time and have a great day!

Jennifer Bond

- For years my family and I have volunteered at the Watermelon Park Festival at the front gate. We have done it so many years we end up training the newbie volunteers. Everyone coming through that gate is so excited to join the event. SO many of them have come back time and time again. We enjoy giving back to a festival that feeds so much to our soul. In August every year we sign up for volunteering and love every minute of it. Every year we celebrate my husband's birthday at the Watermelon Park Festival, which is around his birthday on Sept 20th every year. We always bring birthday cake!! Our 3 godchildren who also come with us, look forward to it every year. It has become an annual tradition to camp, swim, sunbathe, celebrate family, friends, and family who have become friends. We enjoy the bluegrass music, all the bands new and old, the late night dance tent, the impromptu campsite jam sessions, and end the weekend with yoga. It is a beautiful coming together of so many people who we have grown to love and deeply miss. We have become close with a lot of people we never would've met if it weren't for the Watermelon Park Fest. Please please please consider saving the most respected family local festival .. Watermelon Park Fest!!!
- Please include my email and plea with the Permit Application for the Shepard's Ford events at 1352 Tilthammer Mill Rd.

Jennifer Horan

- I understand that Shepherd's Ford Productions has applied for a permit in Clarke County to throw two 3-day events in 2021, on the river South of the original site we have celebrated at for over the past decade.
- I know that some residents are concerned that the events may be too loud and impact the environment negatively. In the 16 years of holding events on the river Shepherd's Ford Production has done a remarkable job in fostering the health and wellness of the river, and educating event participants. We have clean up drives as we float and paddle and camp along the banks, and during the festival events there are various learning experiences for young and old alike - everything from an instrument "petting zoo" to music lessons, making Tye dyes and seed bombs with local seeds, learning about the local river ecology, a youth talent show, and other breakout sessions highlighting the culture of bluegrass such as learning to clog and dancing tutorials.

- Shepherd's Ford Productions has done a remarkable job as stewards of the river and generally making the world a better place. Their annual events on the river are the highlights of my family's year.
- More recently, we had been discussing making the events more ADA and disability friendly for our older participants and those with disabilities.
- I also trust that Shepherd's Ford Productions will take all precautions and ensure the health and safety of all staff, volunteers and participants as we move into Covid vaccinations in 2021.
- Thank you Clarke County Board of Supervisors in advance for your consideration of allowing these truly special events to take place in your neighborhoods.

Jennifer Lee; Bluemont

- I am writing in support of Shepherd's Ford permit application for proposed events at 1352 Tilthammer Mill Road near Millwood. The principals at Shepherds Ford Productions are experienced, conscientious, considerate professionals who have a long track record of producing exceptional, family-friendly events, including Watermelon Park Fest and River and Roots, both formerly held at the Watermelon Park Campground.
- I have been attending those two festivals for most of the last 16 years. The attendees are peaceful, responsible people who want nothing more than to enjoy great music, friends, and the beautiful environment that the Shenandoah River provides. It was a setback to our "music family" to lose the Watermelon Park Campground as the venue, but we are hopeful that this new location will be one that is mutually beneficial to the performers, attendees, land owner, and Clarke County community. Events like this give people a chance to appreciate our beautiful county, contribute to the local economy, and come together in a spirit of service and celebration.
- I hope that any concerns by neighboring landowners can be addressed and mitigated by the proven track record of Shepherds Ford and by the assurances of attendees like me that we will be very respectful and grateful neighbors for a few days each year.

Jennifer Webb

- I am a fused glass artist. I am a vendor at shows or festivals for my income. About 9 years ago I was invited to Watermelon Park Festival. Immediately I

was impressed with the Recycle bins, the impressive volunteer involvement and knew about the river stewardship because my tent was next to the people with information about keeping the river in good form.

- This festival is unlike some of the others in the state, its a family affair with generations attending, my son will be bringing his baby daughter next time.
- The history associated with the music is as rich as each new group of musicians every year.
- I have evolved in my art in the last 9 years and have gained an audience of customers/friends who look forward to what i have made each year. Keeping it short and to the point: We all love Watermelon Festival for so many reasons; music, friends, art, river, fresh air, family.
- I think you will find other letters like mine written because we really love this festival.

Jessica Hurt and Family

- I am writing to ask that the Watermelon Park Festival be permitted to be held on the proposed property. I have attended every single festival since the beginning and never have I seen a more compassionate, environmentally friendly, courteous, and positive festival environment. If this festival is permitted you will be creating a joyous occasion loved by families, children, and loyal individuals who are missing our most favorite yearly event. The joy it brings is unprecedented.
- Please allow this beautiful festival to continue on the Clark County government property.

Jim Millward

- I have been attending Shepherds Ford1s events, formerly at Watermelon Park, for over 10 years. I'm a college professor based in DC. I really enjoy the bluegrass and folk music that they put on. I understand that there may be some community concerns, but let me assure you, it is a very warm, happy, community oriented event. There has never been any trouble for the ten years I have been attending. The music is acoustic music, not particularly loud. The crowd is very dedicated to the community feelings and family vibe of the event. There is a strong pro-environmental sentiment among the participants, and we have always cared for the space that we are privileged to share for a couple of days. The organizers manage very well, so sanitation, trash, traffic,

water and other matters are well handled and even though the participants are caring and responsible, there is a strong backstop behind us from the Shepherds Ford folks, so that the campsite is left as we found it.

- I'm sure others have told you about the long tradition behind these bluegrass and Americana festivals under the former 11Watermelon Park11 label, stretching back decades. The participants in these events--2, even 3 generations worth, will be grateful to any community that allows us to continue the tradition. I hope, too, that there will be economic advantages to allowing us to rent space. Please give your most open-minded consideration to permitting us to hold this event in your area. You could materially contribute to keeping an American tradition alive, and I'm sure there will not be a mess or great inconvenience to your community.

Joanna Levi

- I'm writing on behalf of Shepherds Ford and the annual festivals that they have held for many years.
- Being an attendee at every one of them with the exception of one year, I can attest it is one of the most mild mannered fests I have ever attended, which is many. I look forward to this each year due to the fact that they have always stayed with the old time genre of music which in its very nature mostly all acoustic and the crowd is mild mannered, mostly older folks like myself. It is very important to keep this rich tradition alive and well. As far as the river and the environmental aspect I have witnessed many fest goes actually cleaning around the river things that were already there prior to the fest. That is just the type of person that attends this. I hope you will consider this fest an asset to our area and allow it to continue.
- Thank you for the consideration

John Bestwick

- I am hoping you will consider reviewing and approving the permit for Shepherds Ford Productions to host the annual Watermelon Park Festival at their new location. This has been a very important community tradition that has maintained a responsible and respectable event that does not interfere w/ the surrounding neighbors and environment. Please allow this festival to continue by approving their application.

John Clark; Virginia Beach, VA

- Shepherds Ford Productions has applied for a permit in Clarke County to hold two 3-day events in 2021. The new site they have applied for is on the Shenandoah river South of the original site at Watermelon Park. Some folks living near the site are concerned that their event may be too loud and impact the environment negatively. I believe that in their 16 years of holding events on the river, they have done a good job stewarding the river and generally making the world a better place. This annual tradition means a great deal to me and my family. Please approve their permit.

John Keeney

- For the 12 years I've attended the Watermelon Park festivals I can truly say that they were all very river and eco friendly. That's always one of the main reasons I attend. Also it's great to camp and sleep under the stars and it's always been quiet after the music's over. It's always been a family fun event we enjoy more each year!

Jordan Xu; Loudoun County

- My name is Jordan Xu and I live in Western Loudoun County. I have been going to the watermelon park festival for a number of years. As many people would agree, it is a very important event for the music community in the region. Please approve the application from Shepherds Ford productions to host the event in the new location in Clark county.

Joshua Brown; Pittsburg, PA

- My name is Joshua Brown. I live in Pittsburgh and am writing regarding the Shepherds Ford Productions application for a permit to hold events in 2021 in Clarke County. I would like to highlight why I think the permit(s) should be granted.
- I will always cherish the memories of friendships, music, and the beautiful wilderness that I came to experience through previous Shepherds Ford Productions events, namely their Watermelon Park Festival. The festival participants, many of them local residents, and the organizers are an amazing group of people that care deeply for the lush and pristine geography and wildlife of Clarke County. I am honored to have been able to share in their love

of these lands. The Watermelon Park Festival events fostered a family-friendly environment through which all in attendance were encouraged to be mindful of the unique and precious area into which we had been welcomed.

- From attending the Watermelon Park Festival and meeting several local residents, I know that it is not just pride in the area that can bring concerns about large events, but a deep, passionate love for the community that has been so carefully cultivated and preserved by the residents of Clarke County over the years. Each time they've held an event, the Shepherds Ford Productions team has worked to cultivate and maintain a relationship with the local community to ensure that their concerns are heard and addressed.
- I feel that, over the years, Shepherds Ford Productions has been and will continue to be a mindful steward of this relationship and the lands their events are held on, working with community leadership to plan and execute an event that is family friendly and in accordance with any local requirements. Their events will continue to bring joy to all that attend, but no setting for their events would be better-suited or more in-line with the spirit of their productions than the community of Clarke County and the Shenandoah River.
- It is with this spirit in mind that I ask that Shepherds Ford Production be granted a permit to hold two, three-day events in 2021 at the location(s) requested.
- Thank you very much for your time and for hearing my input.
- As I am unable to attend, please include my thoughts in the December 15th meeting.

Judy Schofield

- I am writing regarding Shepherds Ford Productions and the annual music festival. I am an environmental scientist and mother of two teenagers. My husband and I have attended the music festival in Berryville for more than 5 years with our children. My brother and sister in law join us, along with my husband's high school friends from years ago. We have the BEST family members from the festival. My brother and sister in law play instruments and now so does my son. My teens LOVE the festival. We play in the river and listen to music with friends and family. The river, campground and festival site is well taken care of by attendees. We care about each other and I have had zero problems at the festival. The atmosphere is loving, supportive, wholesome and wonderful. Please consider allowing this festival and joining in!

Juliann Shockley

- This message is regarding the permit for Shepherds ford to hold their festivals along the Shenandoah River. I have been attending these festivals for many years now. There is always a positive vibe, a purpose to bring like minded people together, and to educate and protect our environment. The festivals incorporate water safety and environmental stewardship. Bringing local farmers in for small farmers markets and educational lessons and demos throughout the festival, for both adults and children. These festivals are positive family events. The tradition has gone on for many years and I urge you to allow these wonderful traditions to continue. For many of us, it is a time to come together and share some of our favorite moments of the year.

Julie Frantz

- I have enjoy the festival put on by shepherds Ford productions for many years now. My children have grown up there and their love for the river and for the music abounded. Over the years Shepherds Ford has partnered with and donated to multiple non-profits that help keep the river clean and spread awareness (including education at the events) about conservation and land and river stewardship. These organizations include Friends of the Shenandoah River, Piedmont Environmental Council, Shenandoah River Keeper, and the Downstream Project .. for these reasons and many many others I feel it would only be in everyone's best interest to let them proceed with their 3-day event on the river next year.

Karl Hutchinson

- I just wanted to write a quick note to explain what a great family friendly event and yearly tradition Watermelon Park has been for our friends and family for the past 7 years. Our 7 year old son looks forward to this event every year and being on the river does make this festival special. In my opinion Shepherds Ford Productions has always done a great job of stewarding the river, and providing a great festival of unity and wonderful music. I do hope the tradition on the Shenandoah continues! Thank you for considering this.

Katie Rakes

- I am writing in favor of Shepherd's Ford obtaining the permit to utilize Tilthammer Mill Road as means to hold our annual music festival, formerly known as Watermelon Park Festival. This event provides immense benefits to the local community, including small businesses, vendors, artists, and musicians. It draws visitors to the area that likely would never have known our name, and these people not only support the festival, but also stimulate the economy outside the venue. Once the time of COVID has passed, all businesses will desperately need that extra influx to survive.
- The festival has also provided a personal human connection that these days is long lost amidst technology ... it offers a sense of belonging which keeps us all sane, smiling, and thriving.
- Having said all of this, please consider our permit pleas to continue this wonderful tradition. We are a peaceful bunch, just needing an outlet for our creative culture.
- Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kenneth Hess

- I wanted to send you a quick message regarding the music festival the Shepherds Ford folks are proposing for next year. I have lived in the area for over 30 years, and can say that my experience with Shepherds Ford events has been very positive: they take good care of the river and natural environment and are responsible event hosts, and the people who attend appreciate nature and are not loud or destructive. The musical acts that perform at their events tend to be acoustic-oriented-plugged into a sound system so they can be heard by event participants, but not excessively loud. Their past events at Watermelon Park have been excellent showcases of regional and local talent, and very worthwhile to attend for musicians and fans alike. As a person who frequents music festivals, I can honestly say that the Shepherds Ford events have among the most positive, home-grown community feel of any festival I've attended.
- COVID-permitting, I hope you will allow them to host an event on your property by the river in 2021.

Kevin and Laura Jackson

- I am writing you to express my hope that the application to allow concerts and or commercial camping on the Island Farm property is denied.

- My parents' have lived for more than thirty years across river and a bit upstream from Watermelon Park. Their experience has been that people don't just stay on the property. They have had campers wade across the river and onto their property. Even worse, they have had people from Watermelon Park wade upstream to illegally poach game fish using nets. The game department had to run stings for weekends to slow down this activity.
- I live in Calmes Neck and I have been a very frequent user of the river for over 40 years now. The stretch between Rt 50 and Lockes landing is wild, somewhat remote in sections, and beautiful. It should remain that way. It has only been in the past 6-10 years that I have ever seen otters in the river. I see them most commonly in the area around Island Farm and the point of Calmes Neck. Being a reclusive creature, I have no doubt that their population will be greatly impacted by large amounts of people with the activity and noise created. Perhaps along with other wildlife that use this more remote section of the river.
- The section of river between Lockes landing and rt 7, being not nearly as remote and wild is the better location for a campground with concerts. Please leave this upper section as a wild, scenic stretch ... it can't be improved upon as it stands currently, but absolutely could be harmed with the proposed application being approved. I am asking the board to do the right thing for the county, the citizens, and the river itself by declining this application I have attached a link to the fish poaching that has come from campers at Watermelon Park below. We do not need more opportunities for activities like this on the river. Thank you very much for your time.

Laura Bell; Boyce

- My husband and I have owned a home at 3839 Calmes Neck Lane in Boyce for the past 7 years. We strongly oppose the application for Island Farm Property on Tilthammer Mill for an SUP to host music festivals there. Island Farm Property began an unapproved camp ground this summer, only ceasing operation after County notice. Changing the zoning for this property will be a gateway for year round alternative use of the property and disruption of our home and neighborhood. The unauthorized Island Farm "camp ground" was searchable on the website this summer and it's activity resulted in trespassing on privately owned land in our community. No festival should be held on farm land near a narrower stretch of the Shenandoah River adjacent to a residential

community. Granting this SUP will affect our property values and security-- something we did not anticipate when we fell in love with the nature community of Calmes Neck.

Laura Henderson

- I have attended the annual Watermelon Park festival since 2017. My husband and I attend with his bandmates, who all have been attending festivals for over 20 years. We all believe Watermelon to be one of the cleanest and most family friendly. The staff do an amazing job of keeping the site well maintained the entire weekend of the event. I understand that local neighbors might be concerned, but in the year that took so much away from people I am hoping we get this one special event back in 2021.

Lauren Hauptman

- A long-time fan of the Watermelon Park Festival, I can understand your trepidation about hosting a crowd of tent-dwelling music-lovers who have left civilization behind for the weekend. I urge you to give us a chance. There's nothing as magical or family-friendly as a music festival that supports local talent, where people from nearby areas come to the same place every year to appreciate each other and the community they've developed. You will delight in the music while getting to know us, the goofiest yet friendliest people imaginable.
- Please give us a try and see if we don't improve on acquaintance!
- Below is the letter I sent the Miller family when I heard they were no longer hosting the festival. It should give you a sense of what this event means to me and everyone else. I am so proud of our local festival.
- Thank you sincerely for listening,
- letter to the Miller family, circa July 2020
- Dear Miller family,
- I want to express my heartfelt appreciation for your many years of hosting the Watermelon Park festival. An avid festival-goer, I admit that I was devastated when I saw the news that you were no longer hosting the festival. I understand, though, that there are reasons for these business decisions. To me, Watermelon Park was something to look forward to throughout the year-- like a dessert at the end of summer. No matter what the weather or the time of day, the river looked magical, and watching the children float their

watermelon boats in the Shenandoah while strains of banjo filtered through the sycamores was an activity I cherished. I always felt so lucky to live not two hours away, and I was proud to be local to the best bluegrass festival in the country.

- If you do ever decide to host the festival again, you will be celebrated by many; however, if Watermelon Park's bluegrass festival days truly are over, I appreciate the hospitality you gave us all.

Lesla and David Wesley; Boyce

- We have read the request for permit to conduct a recurring concert venue on property near our 20 acres, bordering on Tilthammer Mill Road. We urge you to deny this permit, protect the lands involved, safeguard the Shenandoah River, and ensure the peace and safety of all of us who live in this beautiful, quiet corner of Clarke County.
- We purchased our home and the surrounding property almost six years ago, specifically because of the rural, peaceful, remote nature of the area in which we live. We have worked with our neighbors to ensure a cooperative and friendly environment is safely made available to all who choose to live here. We are convinced that an external event promoter, whose motive is understandably profit-driven, might want to capitalize on the natural beauty of our neighborhood, but the permit application makes it clear that nothing short of devastation will follow if you grant permission for these events.
 - Our roads are not sufficient to sustain the traffic load described in the permit application and neither are the surrounding intersections.
 - Clarke County's superb law enforcement resources would be greatly overtasked, even with event security, in any of the likely scenarios that unfold in an event of this magnitude.
 - Damage has already been done to the banks of the Shenandoah along the border of the referenced property and thousands of campers and attendees would do still more in every form imaginable, from petroleum and charcoal discharge to trash and other byproducts of so many people celebrating over the course of several days and nights.
 - The noise and light produced by an event of this type is disruptive to livestock and wildlife, as well as to those of us who call this place our home.

- The presence of so many non-residents, especially those participating in the events described, greatly and needlessly increases the risk of crime faced by all who live here.
- Clarke County's careful adherence to zoning will be damaged and our county will become an extension of the commercialization that is sweeping through our beautiful part of Virginia.
- Current efforts to control the spread of corona virus will be set back by allowing such an event, particularly in the manner described in the application.
- Please respect the concerns of the residents of this area and deny the request for a permit to hold these multiple, multi-day events in our neighborhood. Granting it would greatly damage our property values, harm the peace we sought when we purchased land here, and devastate the lands and water of Clarke County. There are many better locations for this type of event and they should be used for their established purpose, rather than changing the nature and purpose of the lands where we live.
- Thank you for considering our views. We will be glad to discuss this with you at any time.

Lil Ledford

- I've been a resident of Berryville for 12 years, and have married into a 4th generation family. This shouldn't matter - but all of us have attended festivals locally, and subsequently brought out-of-town friends into the shopping district for meals and entertainment.
- Certainly there is some headache involved in administering something of this size, however the opportunity for commerce ... if appropriately levied, could be considerable!
- Further, as a resident, I have no tolerance for harmful behavior in our community. Had that been an issue with Shepherd's Ford productions, I would have stopped supporting them and would not now be advocating for them.
- Please permit this commercial opportunity to proceed.

Lisa Perez

- I am reaching out regarding the noise and negative environmental impact concerns around Shepherds Ford's event application. While the event brings more traffic and noise to the area, I believe the community who attends this

event brings more positives than negatives with them. My family has attended their previous events for the past decade. Over the years, we've been joined by my parents (in their 70s) and my niece and nephews ranging in age from newborns to tweens. Shepherds Ford's commitment to creating a family-friendly environment is something that benefits everyone and we all look forward to returning year after year and we look forward to their future events even more after their separation from Watermelon Park, an establishment that has proved through their discriminatory practices that they are no longer worth supporting. The community who attends Shepherds Ford productions is committed to our environment and coexisting in neighborly values. We appreciate each other, our beautiful Shenandoah area, and many of us bring home our recycling to properly dispose of in an environmentally appropriate manner. Please know this community generally goes above and beyond to give back to the area by shopping at local mom and pop establishments and creating an environment for other small businesses to prosper. This has always been important to us and post COVID, reuniting with and supporting our "extended family" will be more important than ever!

- Thank you for your time and consideration of this wonderful opportunity.

Lisa Zimmerman

- I write in hopes that you are doing well and staying safe and healthy during these trying times. Thank you for all that you do for our area.
- Over the last 6 years, I have lived in Round Hill, VA, and have moved just down the road to Purcellville, VA, only two months ago. I have been attending Watermelon Park Festival, located mostly at Watermelon Park Campground, for the last several extending beyond the 6 years of living in this area.
- I can not speak more highly of the festival organizers, the musicians, the volunteers, food and artisan vendors, and the patrons, who come together to make this family friendly little festival happen.
- Rumor has it that this festival is the longest running overnight bluegrass festival in the nation. The tradition of coming together as a community to hear the greats and to pick around a campfire is not taken for granted by anyone involved.
- As long as I have attended and volunteered, I have found it to be the most respectful and friendly festival I have ever attended. Hands down, it is my favorite and hold a very special place in my heart.

- Patrons are respectful, quiet times are abided by the musicians, folks are generally well under control and there to experience the music and togetherness in a beautiful setting. Having such a beautiful setting means that patrons are respectful of the property and neighbors. Generally a few folks might stop at Nalls farmers market, a favorite of many who are driving in from the city. Folks clean up after themselves well.
- I have been attending concerts and festivals since my 20s and there are very few that I hold in such high regard as Watermelon Park.
- I guarantee that attendees and musicians would be the most grateful to host Watermelon Park in this new beautiful setting on the river and to continue the tradition, so much so that no neighbors would find themselves feeling disrespected.

Louis Dean

- Please consider granting the requested permits for Shepherd's Ford. This live music festival has benefitted the local community and the greater community for decades. This tradition is an important part of our Appalachian heritage and has been a part of my family for multiple generations. It also brings much needed tourism dollars into the area and will continue to do so for generations.

Mary C. Master

- I have attended the musical festivals along the river since the 70s. Since Shepherds Ford Productions became the promoters, it has been a much better festival. They are particularly interested in the quality of the experience for those attending. They have great respect for the environment, health of the river and comfort and safety of those attending. Clarke County, I am hopeful, will take up their proposals for new events very seriously and grant them permission. It would be a great access to Clarke County to have these two annual events.
- I grew up in the area and have a great love for it. Please be assured that those connected with Shepherds Ford Productions feel the same and will do everything in their power to make these events family-friendly and enjoyable for all.

Malia Furtado

- I am writing to voice my support of Shepherds Ford Productions and the events they propose to hold in 2021.
- I have attended Watermelon Park Fest and River & Roots, previously held at Watermelon park, many times over the years. The festivals nurture **community** and support local and regional artists in a huge way. They have had a tremendous positive impact on me and everyone I know who has attended. I have attended the events in different capacities over the years: as a fan, as a performing artist, and as a teaching artist.
- The festival has always been sensitive and attentive to the space and surroundings they use. The festival grounds are clean, well organized, well staffed, and very safe. Further more, the festivals also are very, very inclusive, bringing together and welcoming people from all ages and walks of life in a positive and safe atmosphere.
- Shepherds Ford Production has worked very hard to create exceptional events for our community that have brought in income to the area and most importantly brought people together. I think it is very important that Clarke County recognize and support the asset that they have in being able to host these wonderful events.

Mandy Dreisbach

- I'm writing as an attendee of many Shepherds Ford events. I've attended their Watermelon Park Festival in Clarke County for many years. That festival was something my family and those of our friends look forward to each year. It's a midsized event that welcomes all and entertains guests with American roots music that includes performances from established musicians in a genre that reminds us of our country's early years us to new musicians taking that culture and heritage to new and modern heights and making it relevant in today's music scene. The attendees and organizers at these events have always been respectful of the host venue and the surrounding area. Shepherd's Ford and its supporters donate generously and often to non-profits that help keep the river clean and educate eventgoers and others about land and river stewardship. While there is amplified music on site during the day, the evenings may find musicians (and aspiring young musicians) visiting campsites for an impromptu acoustic "camp jam" here and there. I have camped here often and unless you're camping within the first couple campsites next to any "camp jam", you have to go out walking around the grounds to find them.

Many families with young children attend, with no issues keeping those youngin's asleep in the evenings. The attendees love live music, cherish community, and appreciate the chance to get away from the drudgery of the day-to-day to enjoy some time outdoors on a beautiful Virginia river. In addition to the musical acts, Shepherds Ford Productions includes activities for kids and kids at heart, educational sessions about the location and our impact on the environment, opportunities for local artisans to showcase their goods, and opportunities to volunteer or donate to charities with a focus on things that matter to Virginians. And if you don't stop and get a pie (or more) from the farmers market on your way out (and/or in!), you're missing out.

- If you're on the fence about whether to grant Shepherds Ford a permit for any event they're looking to hold, I'd be happy to speak with you directly with respect to my experience as an attendee of their events.

Mark Hughes

- Just a quick note to say that the 3 day festivals operated by Sheppard's ford are the best I have been to and we promise to leave nothing but footprints at the end of the events. It's a kind, gentle crowd and we promise to act responsibly.

Martin Fair; Hillsboro, VA

- I run a small guitar building and repair business called Fairbuilt Guitar Company in Loudoun County VA . I have known David Vandeventer since we were in middle school and we have been friends all along . He and his partners at Shepherds Ford have been putting on great events for many years. I have supported the festival in that I have sponsored a guitar contest and supplied a prize guitar and or cash to the winners. The events produced have always striven to, and delivered a family friendly, music festival with a safe and inclusive atmosphere. They are a reflection of the good people at Shepherds Ford who are good friends and good neighbors. This new venue will become a place where our musical family can meet for wholesome good times and will be immortalized in the memories of many happy visitors to the county. I hope you will consider the festival to be an asset to the community as my family does and our larger community does as well.

Matthew Meade

- I am writing on behalf of your consideration to allow a permit for the new location of the annual Watermelon Park Music Festival. My wife and I got married at Watermelon Park on 8/29/2004. We found out about the very first Park Fest at our wedding and attended the first one ever. We have been to every single one since. We have raised our three children there and have met life long friends that we now call family. This event isn't just a music festival. It's a family reunion. I know the folks who work very hard to put this on. There is nothing more important to them than not only preserving the environment it's located on but educating the folks who attend on how to do so as well. They have been protectors of the river for generations and will continue to do so at the new location while also bringing in revenue to the area. Please allow this family reunion to continue. It really is something magical and beautiful and should be embraced within the local community.
- Thanks you

Matthew Reid; Berryville

- My name is Matthew Reid and I am a 5th generation Clarke resident and also a landowner on the river right near watermelon park. I am writing you to show my support for bringing this great festival back to the river. I fully support this permit and have been going to the festival for 15 years me and my wife have gone from boyfriend and girl friend to husband and wife at this festival and it has been one of the greatest sources of enjoyment and memories in our relationship. The last time it was held we got to take our new daughter and it was her first time, please I'm begging you let her grow up at this wonderful festival on the river.

Maura McGonigle

- I am writing to express my support for the pending petition by Shepherds Ford to hold a bluegrass festival at 1352 Tilt Hammer Road. This festival, organized by Shepherds Ford, has been held at Watermelon Park campgrounds for the last 16 or so years without issue. Indeed, this area was the home to one of the first bluegrass festivals in the country, in 1942. Clarke County recently honored the festival in a Resolution of Appreciation. Unfortunately, Watermelon Park is no longer an option due to the owner's decision to turn Watermelon Park into a full-time RV park. In order to carry on this 60+ year tradition, Shepherds Ford has sought after alternative venues in Clarke Co.

- I've attended the festival every year for at least 11 years and can emphatically say that the organizers care deeply about the river, the environment, and the history of bluegrass in the area. It is one of the most family friendly events of the year, with many of my friends' children growing up attending the festival each year. The community created from this festival is unmatched. Each year, festival attendees take the mantra of "leave no trace" very seriously -- everyone pitches in to clean up the grounds and ensure no trash or debris is left behind.
- Also, as a resident of Washington, DC during all the years of my festival attendance, I have come to love Clarke Co. I make a point of traveling as often as possible to Clarke Co. which absolutely would not have happened had I not attended this festival.
- I'm happy to provide any additional information you may need in order to make your decision.

Melanie Bartenstein

- I am writing in support of Shepherds Ford Productions application for a permit to hold two festivals in Clarke County in 2021. These festivals are family friendly, music filled, and a homecoming for many festivalgoers who attend every year. Please approve the permit. Also, please include my thoughts in the December 15 minutes.

Michael and Becky Tomlin

- I'm writing to you in support of Shepherds Ford Productions. My wife and I have lived in Clarke County for 6 years and we have attended almost every event put on by Shepherds Ford - including Watermelon Park Fest and River and Roots - both held at the Campground. We're always one of the last to depart and I can attest that they leave the grounds very clean and have been good stewards of the river. I've seen people from various environmental groups speaking at their events and educating the public on safe river usage. We love our river and we're avid kayakers so having a clean river is important to us.
- Please include my thoughts in the December 15 meeting minutes since I cannot be there for the meeting.

Mike Reifsnyder

- Just wanted to drop a quick line and let you know that I have been attending Shepherds Ford Productions event at Watermelon park for a decade and know it has always been a family friendly, safe environment. Please consider letting them use the land by the river they are requesting, so we can continue to enjoy it with them. I know they are diligent about providing all the means necessary to keep the site clean by offering trash bags and pickup, and not allowing glass bottles, etc.

Mike Shade

- In the many years I have attended events organized by Shepherds Ford Productions at their previous sites, Watermelon Park Campground, and the Clarke County Fairgrounds, I have witnessed nothing but respect for the river, land, and surrounding communities.
- While productions involving live music are not quiet by their nature, the organizers always take care to respect the rules and carefully plan the events. Strictly enforcing and observing quiet hours, facing stages and speakers in a manner to reduce unwanted impact, and other precautions can be used in conjunction to provide a great experience while limiting impact on the surrounding community.
- Please support their application for permits to hold their events, and I promise as an attendee to also be a good steward of the land, river, community, and abide by the rules.

Nathan Hackett; Lovettsville, VA

- I am writing in regards to Watermelon Park Fest and their application for a new venue south of Watermelon Park. I have been going every year since they started it back up in the early 2000's and can attest to their dedication to cleaning up the river. My kids have grown up going every year since they were in their mommas belly. Every year the river is cleaner than it was before the festival. Please consider this spot that they are applying for. Thank you for your time.

Pepper Watkins

- I'm writing to share my support for Shepherds Ford Productions' permit applications for events in 2021. I'm a Clarke County native (CCHS class of 2000) and while I now live in Washington, DC, my family remains in Clarke County

- and I come back often to visit, which for the last decade+ has included enjoying Watermelon Park Fest and River and Roots. It was a heartbreaker when we learned that these events weren't going to continue at Watermelon Park, and I was thrilled when I heard that there was an alternate location identified for
- potential future events.
 - In my experience, SPF has proven a good citizen and steward of Clarke County's resources, managing these events with the mindset of a community partner that wants to highlight Clarke County's natural beauty and legacy of great music while taking care of the land and river. It has put its money where its mouth is by highlighting environmental issues and contributing to causes that steward the river.
 - While I can certainly understand the concerns that nearby landowners have with new events, I would have every expectation that SPF would continue to be a good neighbor, would be responsive to neighbors' specific concerns and would act in good faith to address them and actively convey this imperative to event attendees. If neighbors or the County have specific concerns, I hope they would be able to work with SPF to identify risks and put in place a mitigation plan to ensure that events would have a minimal environmental and community impact--enabling these events to continue to do good work in the community and provide a much enjoyed (and now famous) cultural outlet for our little slice of heaven. I believe that any potential risk or downside is more than offset by the benefit, value, and enjoyment that these events would bring to Clarke County.
 - Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these applications. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Rebecca Kraft; Arlington, VA

- I am writing today in support of Shepherd's Ford Productions' application to hold two 3-day events in 2021. My family and I have attended almost a dozen events produced by Shepherd's Ford, including the Watermelon Park Bluegrass Festival going back as far as 2010. While I have attended festivals around the country of all sizes, Watermelon Park was my favorite because of the intimate connection between audience and performers.
- I have heard there may be concerns about damage to the environment. I would like to point out that Shepherd's Ford has included family activities that allow children to cavort in the river (for instance making watermelon boats)

and to learn respect for the river too. Environmental groups have had a presence at the festival as well, helping raise consciousness about this unique historic natural area. It is my experience that campers respect the grounds and keep trash contained and disposed of properly at the end of the events. For instance, I have never seen litter in the river. Never. Regarding concerns about noise, there is a good deal of bluegrass instrument picking, some until the wee hours. But the music from the stage is either pointed toward the river and cut off at a set time, or in the case of the dance tent, it is in the center of the parking field and the noise does not bleed beyond the parking/camping area.

- I would love to see a successor festival to Watermelon Park Bluegrass Festival take root in Clarke County. This unique event has made your county very very dear to my heart and to my family. I urge you to approve Shepherd's Ford Productions' application.

Rebecca Trapp; Baltimore, MD

- I have attended Watermelon Park Fest for several years-twice a year most years. I have taken grand children when ages 6-11 & felt they were out of my site together. They loved it.
- I am a Leave No Trace Leader & feel the event stays clean & all trace is removed after. The river is loved & respected.
- The attendees are everything from young families with babies to elderly.
- I have been impressed by politeness of all.
- The managers do a great job.
- Many support local businesses.
- I look forward to visiting Clarke Co VA

Rick Gondella; Bluemont

- As a concerned citizen of your neighboring county of Loudoun, I am writing to voice my support of the music festivals Shepherds Ford has petitioned to present.
- I have attended many of the festivals presented at Watermelon Park, and I can tell you that attendees are respectful and law-abiding. They are respectful of "quiet hours" (whatever the hours are deemed to be by those in authority) and they abide by them. Further, since the predominant music enjoyed by attendees is primarily acoustic-based, worries about loud, raucous music are misplaced.

- I am a 64-year old father of three, and have had no problem over a dozen years bringing my children to the Shepherds Ford productions. The producers, in fact, have been excellent mentors to my children.
- And as someone who uses neither alcohol, drugs, or tobacco, I can vouch that the Shepherds Ford productions have never devolved into the kind of irresponsible events we hear about sometimes on the news.
- What is more, the Shepherds Ford producers have a deep and abiding respect for the River and the land around it. You could not ask for better stewards.
- I sincerely hope that these festivals are permitted. They bring great value to the community, and they can be an economic boon to county.

Rick Tillmann

- Good afternoon. I have attended all but two of the festivals over the years and have never had a bad experience, even when it rained.
- Please convey to those concerned that it usually doesn't get loud at all because most of the instruments are not electric. Only for two nights does it get louder and usually only til 11 or so.
- It's a great opportunity to showcase the beauty of the River and surrounding area.
- Assuming we have put Covid behind us, please allow this really special music festival to continue!

Robert Randolph; Bluemont

- My wife, Nina, and I live across the Shenandoah River from the site where Shepherd's Ford productions intends to produce two three-day festivals in 2021. Shepherd's Ford Productions previous festivals have been exceedingly well managed, have not disturbed neighbors with excessive noise or public drunkenness, have been honored by the Country Music Association and have put Clarke County on the map in a very, very positive way.
- I fully support Shepherd Ford's application.

Robyn Schneiderman

- I urge you to approve a permit for Shepherds Ford Productions to have events along the Shenandoah River in 2021. The group has a long history of hosting events along the river and always with the utmost respect to the waterway

- and the surrounding community. They are members of the community themselves, and deeply value the land, animals and people that call it home.
- Over the years Shepherds Ford has partnered with and donated to multiple non-profits that help keep the river clean and spread awareness (including education at the events) about conservation and land and river stewardship. These organizations include Friends of the Shenandoah River, Piedmont Environmental Council, Shenandoah River Keeper, and the Downstream Project.
 - Please approve of their request for a permit.

Ryan Wick; Herndon, VA

- My name is Ryan Wick and I am a long time attendee (... 15 years) of the Watermelon Park Fest previously held at Watermelon Park Campground in Benyville. I'm writing to please ask for your approval of their permit for a three day event along the river. The Shepherds Ford staff and volunteers have always done an outstanding job in planning and executing the festival. They are mindful of noise concerns and the concerns of nearby residents. They keep the grounds and facilities clean during the event and maintain security and peace during the festival. The community of attendees, many of which have done this together for many years, take special *care* of their grounds and usually leave them better than when they arrived. The festival is no ordinary festival and that's because of the people. Always good, caring, welcoming people. I would love for Shepherds Ford to find another home for the festival along the Shenandoah River and I ask that you please approve their permit for 2021 and please come out to experience the event! Its a truly wonderful family friendly event.

Samantha Arnold

- This letter is in regards to Shepherd's Ford Production's stewardship of the Shenandoah River in Clarke County as it pertains to hosting events in Clarke County. I have attended several events hosted by Shepherd's Ford, all of which have occurred on sites bordering the Shenandoah River. The company encourages a respectful attitude from their patrons and provides adequate facilities for patrons to carry-out and create a respectful environment for both the grounds and people in attendance of their events. It is one of the reasons my family and I enjoy attending events hosted by Shepherd's Ford so much.

The Shenandoah River is an extremely important part of our lives and I am writing today in support of Shepherd's Ford Productions' application for permits in 2021 to continue supporting a company (one of the few) who lives out the values they preach in terms of sustainability and inclusiveness.

Samantha Minichino

- My whole family has been attending Shepherds Ford Productions events for almost 10 years. They have always done an incredible job stewarding the river and land, and it is my hope that they get the permits that they applied for so our family traditions can continue. This year was hard on so many people, please let us have this. It is important to so many people. This company is an honest company who demonstrates their desire to make the world a better place with their actions, not just their words.
- Please take all this consideration and please approve the permit request.
- If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me. My cell phone is listed below. :)
- Thank you so much!

Sandy Krogwold

- My husband and I have been attending this gathering for several years. The Shepard Ford group has been sure to accommodate all people and have been wonderful stewards of our environment. The music is beautiful and the families that attend are very respectful.
- Please consider them for your site!

Sara McAfee

- Please consider the Shepard Ford Bluegrass Festival. I have been going since 2010, it is one of my favorite vacations. Through the years many of us have become family and count on this event to gather together. I live in the area and know and love the river. I have never felt the festival had a negative impact on the environment. I arrive on the earliest day, and on the last day I take all day to pack my gear and enjoy the river before I go. I don't see any more trash in and around the river on the last day then was already there on the first day. Also, Friends of the Shenandoah River has a lecture at the festival to teach visitors about the river's history and the ways they can help care for it. We all

love the river and count on her for many things. Please, please accept Shepard Ford's application for their two events.

Sara Porter

- Just wanted you to know how much my family and I love this festival. We always do our part to keep the river clean and camp areas cleaned up afterwards. We are hoping our festival can continue and bring revenue to your community.

Sarah Laye

- I'm writing to express my deepest support in allowing Shepherds Ford to lease the pending site to host their various events. My family with 2 young children have found Watermelon Park to be the most family friendly, relaxed and quiet event which is why we have gone every year we have had children. Please allow this to continue if you have any power to do so. The area neighbors would be welcomed and very well respected for allowing this. Thank you for your consideration.

Scott Carey

- As one who has attended all of the Shepherds Ford Production events and as one who attends numerous others and has worked production at several large events (not this one) I can tell you that this is one of the best run events I know of!
- These folks know how it's done correctly, and I have seen many that could use these good folks as a model for how it's done right.

Scott Riffle

- I have some brief comments for the Public Hearing 2020-06 taking place on 15 Dec regarding the application by Shepherds Productions to host live events and camping at 1352 Tilthammer Mill Rd, AKA, The River Farm.
- I am a property owner located directly across the river from this location on Calmes Neck Ln. While I fully appreciate the historic and cultural value of the Watermelon Festival, I strongly object to any use of the River Farm for the purposes of establishing a commercial campground, regardless of whether the campground is temporary or permanent. In addition to the potential noise and light pollution that will be caused by establishing a campground at the River

Farm, I am most concerned about the negative environmental impact on the river of introducing *thousands* of campers along the banks of the river. The Shepherds production application shows that they plan to establish a camping area along approximately one mile of river bank. There is no way they can positively control the actions of thousands of campers occupying such a large stretch of the river, which will inevitably lead to pollution in the river, litter along the banks, erosion of the riverbanks, disruption of the river habitat, and other generally negative environmental impacts. I'm sure the organizers of this event are well intentioned, but there is simply no way they can avoid these negative environmental impacts on the river with that many people gathered on such a large stretch of river. Period. Full Stop.

- To conclude, please do not grant Shepherds Productions any permits to conduct any form of commercial camping, temporary or permanent, at the River Farm. To do so is to guarantee negative environmental impacts on the river.

Scott Schooling; Berryville, VA

- I am writing to encourage you to approve Shepherd for productions application for use of the site on the Shenandoah River.
- I have attended their events with my family at Watermelon Park for years, and they have become a very important part of my life.
- We are usually among the last out after a festival, and we always are sure to leave the site better than we found it. I believe this is a common ethos among festival attendees.
- Shepard's Fords personnel have respect for the land and the river and would be a very responsible steward of any event.
- I hope you will approve this application for them, for the benefit of the community, and the enjoyment of my family

Shannon Floyd

- I would like to express my support for the permit put forth by Shepherds Fords Productions regarding event locations along the Shenandoah River. In my experience, past events have been joyful but controlled, and had little effect on the environment.

- The culture of the group is a family-friendly celebration of Virginia culture. My children, my elderly mother, and myself look forward to attending such events again!
- Thank you for your kind consideration.

Shawn Wright; Jefferson County, WV

- My name is Shawn Wright I was born and raised in Virginia. I'm currently a resident of Jefferson County, WV. I live very close to the Shenandoah River. My family enjoys the river very much and try to be a stewards of it, just like Shepherd Ford Production which has put on the Watermelon Park Festival the last 16 years. I've been to countless festivals of all types the past 25 plus years. This festival is the best small family friendly music festival I've ever been to. My family has been blessed to live to close to it and have been able to attend the last 10 years. It draws a diverse group of wonderful people and an excellent mix of Bluegrass, Americana, Folk, & World Acoustic music, just to name a few genres. I urge you to allow to music festival to happen this year. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Stephen Hu

- I am writing to support the recent application for event permits for Shepherds Ford Productions in Clark County.
- I have attended events by Shepherds Ford in the past 6 years. Each event has been very respectful to the participants and local residents. Since they focus on acoustic music the volume levels are generally lower than a large rock or country show. Shepherds Ford is also very environmentally friendly, encouraging their guests to clean up and recycle.
- Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Steve Aitcheson

- Hello, I want to recommend Clarke county approve the subject vendor proposal and permits. We have attended their festivals for over a decade and have been very impressed with their values of environmental protection and community engagement. As an owner of a business that provides both outreach/community involvement and environmental support services in Virginia, I am proud to be a supporter of Shepherds Ford.

Stu Applegate

- I am also writing this letter in regards to the wonderful festivals that SFP hosts twice a year. The recent separation of the campground with the production company have left many of us confused and missing each others company. We hope that you can understand the influx of emails from all of the concerned patrons of the festivals. We have received emails notifying us that they have possibly found a new place to have their wonderful festivals, asking us to inform you how well run and respectful these festivals are. The Shepherds Ford Production company is a wonderful and well thought of company, that also is educational and a strong supporter of your community. We understand the concern of the locals and want them to know that everyone who participates, by either volunteering or simply attending for the love of the atmosphere and music are also a fine group of people. Shepherds Ford has always had a handle on the type of music and the understanding of the local curfew. Thank you for your time, patience and understanding that we care deeply for each other, your community, the local towns and the river at which is of utmost importance.

Sue Neff

- I'm writing to let you know that I support the two events that Shepherd Ford has applied for in 2021. They run a great festival with a community feel unlike any other festivals I've attended. Friends came down from upstate NY and are ready to return as they were just impressed with the way everyone is drawn together by the common love of music and the real family connection this festival vibe creates.
- Amplified music stops at a reasonable time and you didn't even hear it across the campground. People are good about cleaning up and the number of staff and volunteers keep everything running smoothly.
- I've attended both at the fair grounds and at watermelon, and along the river is so much better. It's just beautiful and draws people from all over to enjoy our community and share our Virginia music traditions.
- I hope they are able to continue hosting festivals next year.

Thomas Bell; Boyce

- Please print a copy of this letter for the commission lodging my strong opposition to the proposed commercial use of Island Farm.
- While supportive of culture in general, I find the application to turn this farm land into a commercial concert and camping venue far too ill defined to support. The open ended nature of the application is too vague to approve. The noise, air, water, and light pollution that would certainly occur as a result of turning this venue into a commercial venue needs to be seriously studied and debated, but would certainly be profound. This change in land use will change this portion of the Shenandoah river forever - and not for the better.
- Add to this the fact that these land owners have already proven themselves untrustworthy by opening an unauthorized campground on the property this past year. That fact alone should give the county significant pause in approving this application.
- There are plenty of venues in Clarke County where music festivals could occur - for instance the fair grounds. The commission should not approve this application.

Thomas Holter

- I am writing in hopes that Clarke Co Officials will allow the festivals to proceed. They are a family.
- Tradition, and now with Grand children, it would be especially sad not to have them.
- Shepard Ford Productions has always been concerned with keeping the place clean, with a Friendly atmosphere.

Tim Lawrence; Berryville

- It has come to my attention that Shepherd's Ford Productions has filed a request to have festivals on the Shenandoah River. While the previous site agreement with Watermelon Park sadly has ceased, the continuation of these festivals is an important decision.
- The beautiful riverbanks have echoed music far longer than the festivals have taken place, and the events of the past have given Clarke County a highly respected notoriety. People from all over the U.S. have camped on its banks to enjoy this truly special event.
- Rightfully so, some people may harbor concerns about environmental impacts. Shepherds Ford has done a tremendous job of attempting to

minimize environmental impacts. They have also been stewards of the river by bringing awareness to conservation issues. They have worked with Friends of the Shenandoah and other conservation groups to aid in protecting this precious treasure.

- As an attendee of the festival since its rebirth, I have witnessed children playing on its banks, gazing in wonder at its beauty, learning about its ecosystem, and dancing with delight to the sounds the festival provided. I cannot think of a better course for the county than to provide an opportunity for these festivals to continue. They provide much needed revenue as attendees spend their money in local businesses. They provide an opportunity for families to share a special experience, and they would continue to build on the reputation of the county as an important part of music history. Please choose to support this venture.

Timothy Murphy; Lovettsville, VA

- I am writing this email to show support for the Shepherds Ford Production Application to hold two 3-day events in Clarke County in 2021. I have attended their events and cannot think of a more responsible host for these important cultural events.

Tim Ryan

- I just wanted to take a moment to voice my support for the folks at Shepherds Ford who have applied to host a couple of festivals in Clarke County. I've been to events hosted by the folks at Shepherds Ford, they are well run and extremely family friendly. Additionally, while most of the folks who attend are "outdoor oriented" by definition, the hosts also typically have rules that are geared to keep the facilities from getting "loved to death". The crowds are generally well behaved and follow the rules.
- I don't live in Clarke County, but would love to have the opportunity to come out and spend some time and money in your county.

Tina Bauch

- It has come to my attention that there are concerns from the residents living near the site of the proposed subject Music Festivals. We have been attending the Watermelon Park Festival for decades, and I can honestly tell you that Shepard's Ford is a well-oiled machine. They have overcome adversity and

setbacks over the years thoughtfully and professionally. I've attended festivals coast to coast and overseas, and this team gets it all done and done very well.

- Please reconsider their application and consider their track record ... a rich history of supporting and celebrating all that is good about the power of music.

Todd Miller

- I am writing on behalf of Shepherds Ford Productions relative to their request to produce two short public events at a new site. Having attended their events in the past, and many competing events in their class, I can honestly say I have always been impressed with the professional manner in which Shepherds Ford events are planned, scheduled, staffed, and executed. The participants are orderly and act responsibly. Crowd control, trash control, traffic control and environmental responsibility have all been handled with the highest degree of importance, compliance, and respect. Having seen their venues just several days post-event evacuations, there is virtually no indication remaining that any event had recently taken place. Trash has been promptly removed and all signage and rental equipment such as stages and sound equipment and towers, all removed and grounds tidied.
- While I understand some residents may be concerned, and of course their rights do matter too, it would seem to me that the overall good these events bring to Clarke County in terms of economic development and revenue should also be heavily considered. With all this in mind, I hope you agree to approve these events. Missing Watermelon Park Bluegrass this year was more disappointing than missing other family/friend events that most people would typically deem "more important". Please let the show(s) go on!
- Thank you for your consideration of this matter and for reading my support for Shepherds Ford Productions.

Tom Gill

- My son and I have been attending these festivals previously held at Watermelon Park since he was nine years old. They have always been a very family oriented affair. Over the last several years both he and I have volunteered from time to time at the festivals and I have found that attendees have always been very respectful of the surroundings and local residents. Shepherds Ford has gone to great lengths to ensure that noise levels late in the evening are kept very low and respectful. It has been my experience that

when someone is being a little too loud they are very apologetic and respectful when it is brought to their attention.

- I hope this email helps you in your decision. These festivals have become very important to a lot of people who want to be able to do something fun with their family, but don't want to subject their children, or themselves, to a bunch of drunks and fights that you see at other festivals.

Tony White; Cross Junction, VA

- I've been going to the Watermelon Park Festival since the beginning. I even
- volunteered for a number of years.
- They put on a quality show, and it's always well organized, with security. They have had many nationally known bands, and many soon-to-be-known bands and artists. The crowds are well behaved and well controlled. It's a family friendly affair.
- I know the organizers and they are responsible people.

Trevor Kendrick

- I have attended Shepherds Ford Productions festivals since I moved to Virginia. In all of the years that I've attended their shows I can say that it is an extremely family friendly and respectable environment. The organizers and attendees have extreme respect for the land and the property of the individuals who may live in the area. Fans of bluegrass and music young and old are a wonderful community and are inviting of any and all who plan on attending. I've never experienced any issues and haven't seen anyone get out of hand. I'm really hoping that you approve their permits for 2021 and believe they will be a wonderful addition to your county's offerings.

Tricia Moore

- Good evening, I have been going to watermelon festival for 9 years and it has been the most amazing time hearing wonderful music and sharing time with friends and enjoying the Shenandoah river. The festival site is complementary completely clean at the end of the event as everybody bags their trash and recycles and then they get immediately picked up after the festival ends. The children have a fabulous time as there are many events during the day for them to meet and learn about instruments and do crafts and they even have a children talent show. These children create the same bonds that the adults

do with the new people they meet and camp near. We all were devastated when watermelon park did not continue with this great event. But I am so happy that there's an opportunity for Shepherds Ford to continue their production of amazing music and great gathering of people. I ask that you move forward with approving the new site so that we can all get back together with music and friends.

Victor Walters; Lovettsville, VA

- I am writing at the request of SFP regarding their application. I realize you are probably getting a lot of letters regarding this issue, so I will try to be brief. I am currently 68 years old and I have been going to the Watermelon Park Bluegrass Festival held in September, every single year since 2006. I started going because my son, Ben Walters, is a bluegrass musician. I quickly made it my annual vacation; I went on a Monday, the festival officially started on Thursday, and I departed Sunday. Of course, that is not arrangement SFP is applying for, but it goes to show you what type of people the festival draws. It is truly a family friendly environment and the format SFP has always includes many activities for children and their parents. I have met so many wonderful people from all parts of this country that I only see at this festival.. .I miss that.
- Sorry to go on, but you should feel comfortable knowing the SFP has always performed with great consideration to everyone and the environment. If noise is an issue, they will do whatever is needed .. including limit on times for music.
- Thanks for your consideration and I hope you approved the application for permits.

Vineet Aggarwal

- I have come to learn that there is some push back against Shepherd's Ford Productions' upcoming festivals being held in Clark County on the Shenandoah River. I can tell you that I am as eco-conscious as they come -- my house is almost net zero carbon, as I have solar panels for electricity and a wood stove for heat. I would never participate in an event that I thought would pollute our precious Earth. However, I have attended every festival put on by Shepherd's Ford for the past many years. Why? Because I think they are actually a POSITIVE force for the community and the environment. There is very much a

vibe of being "green" at the festival, and that vibe rubs off onto the participants to the point that I have NEVER seen anybody pollute or otherwise harm the river or festival grounds. I would strongly urge you to offer Shepherds Ford every consideration in holding their events -- it would benefit Clarke County and frankly the world at large for making better citizens through the power of music.

Wendy Watkins

- My experience of Shepherds Ford's music events on the Shenandoah River is that they are well run, safe family oriented events. When staying across the river, I have enjoyed several days of music. Fun, but not disruptive!

Will Walker

- I'm writing today in support of the applications that Shepherds Ford Production has submitted for events next year.
- As a long-time supporter and attendee of their events, I can attest to the high priority they place on the environment and the river.
- I think they will continue to produce high quality events with negligible environmental impact and encourage you to vote in favor of their proposals.

William McQueeney

- I've been going to there Festival 's since the beginning , I come from Ct and it would be great to continue coming down to your beautiful County, please give them a chance to have this Wonderful Festival

Elijah Willems

- I hope I'm not too late in sending this email. I wanted to let you know that I have to utmost respect for the way Shepherds Ford manages their annual events at Watermelon Park. I'm a fan of bluegrass music and I attend several festivals each year. That being said I have never seen a festival grounds be returned to natural state so quickly. I was amazed seeing the site on Sunday afternoon knowing the amount of patrons that had been there just hours earlier, you couldn't find a single scrap of garbage anywhere on site. Watermelon Park Festival by Shepherds Ford has been the most respectful, clean and pleasant music festival I've ever attended.

Liz Ralston

- I have attended the Shepherd's Ford Production events at Watermelon Park for the past 16 years. I am an avid festival goer, sometimes attending as many as 20 festivals a year, and this is **by far the most family friendly, environmentally conscious festival I have attended.** At Shepherd's Ford festivals, attendees are very conscientious of noise and trash because it is a FAMILY event. There is music and crafts and yoga and dancing and community. Please allow this family friendly festival to continue so that good music and good people can come together for a good time.

Jim Fagan

- My name is Jim Fagan. I understand that Shepherds Ford productions has asked for a permit for two music festivals in 2021. The music is largely Bluegrass oriented, and as such attracts a very well behaved and somewhat older crowd and a crowd that tends to be very well behaved. I can attest to that because I attend many Bluegrass festival and the fans tend not to get drunk loud and obnoxious. They are there for the music and companionship. They also do not leave a mess when they go to leave. The festivals have been at Watermelon Park (upriver from the proposed site) continuously since 2004. The Miller family was quite pleased with our behavior and our environmental impact. When the pandemic arrived, they had many local folks camping at their campground in order to keep social distance and not travel very far from home. Thus their campground was quite "booked". That may not be the case later next year after people get vaccinated and the people will again be able to travel far and wide. Also having a festival in an area helps generate business for enterprises in area. I strongly recommend that you accept Shepherds Ford proposal.

Russell McKelway; Berryville

- As a 23 year resident of Clarke County with a farm in easement, a Berryville business owner, and the Vice Chairman of the Blue Ridge Wildlife Center, I write to express my opposition to the proposed Island Farm Event Center off Tilthammer Road.
- The Blue Ridge Wildlife Center's driveway is adjacent to Island Farm's access road. The number of proposed attendees exceeds by 1-2 orders of magnitude the number of vehicles which could safely navigate Tilthammer Road.

Inevitable back-ups would delay and discourage the delivery of injured animals to our center.

- Taking a wider view, the proposed venue is simply not in keeping with what we have all tried so hard to preserve over many years - Clarke's identity as rural and agricultural. It would also lead to the degradation of the extensive Shenandoah River frontage that Island Farm enjoys. Many citizens and organizations toil to keep the River healthy and clean; I would prefer to avoid users who would inevitably push things in the opposite direction.
- As a psychiatrist I also feel compelled to mention that "Events" and "Music Festivals" often more closely resemble "Open Air Drug and Alcohol Festivals with Music Playing in the Background". Those who attend will not be driving at their best either coming or going. We can certainly rest assured that there would be little to no Covid testing, social distancing or mask wearing. These events are equivalent to a candy store for those fond of committing sexual assault. Overdose deaths should be anticipated. The strain on our First Responders would increase.
- Please do not approve the Island Farm Event Center proposal.

Shan Hill Farm; Boyce

- As you consider the request from Shepherds Ford Productions for an event venue permit for The River Farm on Tilthammer Mill Road at the base of Vineyard Hill, within a mile of our farm, please keep in mind some of our concerns which follow.
- Approval of this venue location request would have a detrimental impact to the county and many property owners from a farming perspective, traffic, noise, trash, road safety and more. The key is to match this kind of event with a more appropriate location, minimizing the negative effects.
- **Projected Traffic**
- Access to the proposed venue from any route is by narrow and very tricky country roads with treacherous turns, blind hills and other hazardous features including shear banks, stone walls, trees and fencing. Tilthammer Mill, Clay Hill and Eilerslie Roads have seen a considerable increase in cut-through traffic. Faster, more careless drivers require extreme vigilance. These roads are shared with carriages, cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians.
- Large volumes of traffic would pose serious hazards, especially at Vineyard Hill which is around a sharp curve, down a steep incline with a stream and bridge immediately at the base, and where the venue driveway narrowly funnels

out. There are also four private access points which line this span from the curve, further complicating the flow.

- The volume of horse trailers, trucks, vans and large vehicles travelling these county routes has also increased, creating another challenge to safely navigating daily activities. The Shenandoah River runs to the edge of Ellerslie Road in some places, and there is no option for a large and/or small vehicle to pass alongside each other without one reversing course. Non-local motorists unfamiliar with the roadways, will pose danger with or without the factor of alcohol and drug consumption.
- With so many concert go-ers, backed-up traffic on access routes will create an added risk to attendees, locals and livestock with the possibility of emergency services unable to reach those in need in a timely fashion.
- Longer-term consequences include the integrity of the bridges and roads. There are at least three nearby bridges (2 within a mile) along the routes and the impact of added traffic, RVs and trucks, would hasten deterioration and need for maintenance.
- This River Farm site does not offer workable alternatives through traffic management due to the hazards created by the narrow roadways and the geographical features along the routes. These same features make Clay Hill, Tiltammer Mill and Ellerslie Roads unquestionably several of the county's most scenic; its farms and land-use provide blue-ribbon vistas to visitors.
- ***Economic Impact***
- The "fallout" from this unsuitably-located event would hit the bottom line of local farmers and their businesses. Stress and injury to livestock, diversion of workforce to monitoring real and personal property, equipment and employees unable to navigate roads during crop season and liability issues are just a few of the concerns.
- Farming is work with little-to-no profit. The added burden of any negative economic impact on local business would place a bigger bullseye on more lucrative land-use alternatives, such as converting open space for residential use as allowed under current zoning.
- The increase in resources required by the county to address the impact of the proposed event venue would surpass economic benefit to county businesses. The proposed location would likely see event attendees opt to visit Upperville, Middleburg and Winchester over our Berryville businesses.
- ***Other off-site event by-products:***

- **Trash** along the access routes will increase in volume. Not only is trash a nuisance and eyesore, it is a threat to crops and the wildlife which the river, roadside farmland and woodlands attract.
- **Noise** along the river travels far. It would impact many landowners on either side of the river and would create a hardship for two of our prized Clarke County ambassadors which rehabilitate and release wildlife - both adjoin the subject venue. We should strive to protect the integrity of these institutions known well-beyond the bounds of our community.
- **Wildlife disturbance** from both of the above-mentioned sources would increase. Wild animals displaced from mountain habitat already roam our farms, disturbing livestock and creating havoc.
- **Law Enforcement Violations** would be consequential. Trespassing and illegal parking would not only be an issue for landowners and livestock, but also our police officers. Adding in alcohol and drugs will only exacerbate these issues and require a greater need for police enforcement. This festival has drawn a varied crowd over the years at Watermelon Park.
- Through the foresight and efforts of those who came before us (commission members, supervisors, farmers, agriculturalists, businessmen and landowners), Clarke County has become a model for historic and agricultural preservation. One example of this foresight neighbors the proposed venue – the van Lennep Foundation. It was set aside in open-space preservation for farming and livestock. Other nearby properties in conservation easement further demonstrate a similar commitment.
- While approval of this request will be tethered by an expiration date to the permit, this action would have an adverse impact on Agricultural-Open Space-Conservation zoning by setting a precedent to greater land use pressures at unsuitable locations. Such action will further erode the slice of rural beauty and tranquility for which our county is known. Clarke County’s reputation for open space preservation strengthens its remaining rural fibers - we are teetering between farmland and sprawl with every generation and land-use decision.
- Venue alternatives with more suitable access, infrastructure and zoning can be found. The Clarke County Fairgrounds would offer each, as well as the benefit of proximity to restaurants, groceries, drug stores, fast food, medical needs, etc. In a post-Covid era, this would be a much-welcomed economic influx to our community.

- We strongly urge the Board of Supervisors to deny this request of Shepherds Ford Productions until a suitable location is targeted. We feel it is in Clarke County’s best interest to protect the integrity of our zoning!
- Thank you for your consideration.

Andrew Birkmire

- I am writing on behalf of Shepherd's Ford Productions, for the past 16 years I have personally attended every Watermelon Park Festival, from when I was in my late twenties to my current mid-forties. My son, who is now 11, also has attended every single year, even when he was less than 3 months old.
- Those festivals were all very family friendly, and not one time was there ever an incidence of violence or bad behavior that I ever heard reported or witnessed. The friends that I camp with all now also have kids, and we love spending time on the river listening to great traditional acoustic music.
- Being the nature of acoustic music, the noise level is very low as compared to a festival where bands are using electrified instruments.
- All of the campers are respectful and take care of all of their trash and recyclables.
- Currently Shepherd's Ford is looking for a new venue to hold that festival, I would kindly ask you to strongly consider their proposal. The small businesses around the Watermelon Park site all benefitted from the festivals, and to my knowledge the residents in the area were largely unaffected.
- Thanks you for your consideration in this matter. Looking forward to seeing a beautiful new part of the river!

Ann Hindman

- Watermelon festival has been such a wonderful music event, my favorite of the festival season. The values they instill in the attendees is like no other and should be granted the approval to continue this event.

Anne Balzhiser; Arlington, VA

- I've attended five Watermelon Park festivals in the last six years and have always found them to be well organized and environmentally conscious. They are quite clear about respecting property. And I have always appreciated their enforcement of quiet hours for those who need to get a decent night's sleep!

- The festivals provide a wonderful opportunity for adults and children to hear great music in a relaxed and welcoming environment. Certainly an experience my children and grandchildren will never forget. Hope the tradition can be continued!

Bess Putnam

- Good afternoon! I am a local musician that has been attending what was the Watermelon Park Festival for the last 4 years. It was the nearest thing to heaven I've experienced in how respectful everyone was of one another and the campgrounds and the approach to music. It is the single best experience I've given to my 2 children. The talent present onstage and throughout the campground is unparalleled amongst other music festivals. Also, unlike other festivals, children and family activities are a huge focus.
- My girls attend a Powhatan school. So, we camped all week and took them to school each morning. I was impressed every single night how when "quiet time" was set ... everything went silent. I remember this distinctly because I had needlessly worried that we wouldn't sleep well for school the next day.
- I've never seen anything like the mutual care and respect all attendees had for each other and was a little heartbroken when it was cancelled. I grew up amongst gospel musicians in Syria, VA on the Rose River ... who have all passed on. This festival gave my girls a taste of my childhood ... making music and playing in the river.
- Please, consider it a privilege to host such a moving event and you'll have the gratitude of many!

Bill Carl; Berryville

- As a Clark County resident Who has attended nine or 10 of the river festivals Put on by Shepherds ford productions, I think they have always been good "stewards of the river" and the lands bordering it. They have always encouraged the participants to leave as small a "footprint" as possible, and I think they, and the participants have used great respect for the River and the land.
- I hope you consider how these festivals encourage the promotion of the performing arts in our community, and the positive effects on tourism.

Brian Ferrell; Berryville

- I would like to add my opinion to the many others on the Island Farm application.
- I am very much against this proposal and I believe it will impact not only the environmental quality of the Shenandoah but the quality of life in Clarke County as a whole.
- As a landowner of a fully operational beef cattle and crop farm, I know how important preserving the agricultural nature of our county is. Adding another camping and music venue in our county will not only increase traffic on roads that are not equipped for the traffic that already swarms our scenic byways in the warmer months. The trespassing and volume of garbage and litter that we have to contend with on our roads is already overwhelming, adding more cars and people will be disastrous.
- Ellerslie Road is barely wide enough for a single car to pass and it will become a main route for Island Farm traffic. There are tractors and farm equipment using our road daily.
- Ellerslie Farm has more than two miles of river frontage. Allowing Island Farm to conduct their proposed business sets a very dangerous precedent for others who own river frontage who may want to profit from their land in a similar way.
- A better option is supporting our Clarke County Fairgrounds/Ruritan Club and the small businesses of Berryville by allowing concerts at the fairgrounds where there is already ample parking and facilities.
- I am happy to discuss this further, please feel free to contact me by phone.

Bruce Davis

- Shepherds Ford Productions has a history of providing great entertainment. They have always left the area better than it was before

Chris Stroech; Shepherdstown, WV

- I'm writing to please ask for your support of Shepherds Ford Productions for events in 2021. As you know, the entertainment industry has taken a devastating hit in 2020. This includes musicians, food vendors, artists, tourism the list of residual effects goes on and on. I'm asking for the Clarke County Board of Supervisors to please approve the permits filed by Shepherds Ford Productions so that we can resume the tradition of bluegrass music, artistry,

food, and culture in the peaceful and friendly environment that they have created for many years in the past.

Clissy Friant Funkhouser

- This is to let you know that Shepherd's Ford Production has run events cleanly and with honor to the environment. Clarke county is fortunate to have the event "Watermelon Park" in its county. Please allow them to continue this wonderful event.

Dana McCoskey

- I am writing to express support for event permits for Shepherds Ford Productions. I have attended two past camping and music events 'Watermelon Park Festival" that Shepherds Ford Productions have organized. These are great community building, family-friendly events.

David Chambers

- Please approve permits for Shepherds Ford Productions to hold two 3-day events in 2021.
- If nearby residents have concerns, I would encourage them to voice them and encourage your Board to convert the most reasonable into terms and conditions for the permit. For example, if I lived nearby, I might be concerned about littering. I think you'll find Shepherds Ford Productions most responsive.
- They have held events nearby for more than 15 years.
- Shepherds Ford Productions and associates like Furnace Mountain are keepers of American culture. Please support them.

Erika

- I am a mother of a 3 year old and 6 year old & have been to numerous festivals in my lifetime.
- Watermelon Park Festival has been an absolute treasure in our lives.
- It was, by far, the most family friendly, cleanest, safest, most respectful event I have ever attended. I attended the festival both pregnant and with a newborn. We have never once encountered a single problem. And we attended the last 4 years when the festival was the most populated in size.

- We are extremely particular about what our children are exposed to and seek out only nurturing & wholesome experiences for them. We were so sad to learn Watermelon Park would no longer be the site for this amazing event.
- We are thrilled to hear there is a possibility to be so close by and still on the river!!!
- Thank you so very much for your consideration.
- We appreciate your time and really look forward to the continuation of such a wonderful gathering of people!

George McQueeney; Killingworth, CT

- I am writing to you regarding Shepherds Ford Productions request to hold two musical events in 2021 on the Shenandoah River south of Watermelon Park. I live in CT but have been a volunteer for the past 13 years at the previous festivals. There has been no trouble at any of them as I am sure you are aware. One was even held at the Clarke County Fairgrounds when Watermelon Park was flooded. The music is always confined to the festival and is shut down by midnight on the stages and only some low level campsite picking later. We love your County and the river. The festival always donates to the local environmental groups who support the river's health and welfare. The area has always been left as clean or cleaner than before the festival. This is not heavy metal or hard rock and roll it is mainly acoustic and bluegrass. This is a very laid back event and I hope you will be in favor of these two wonderful events.

Holly Reasner

- I am writing to you with regard to Sheppard Ford's request to hold two events in 2021 in Clarke County. I have attended their events for the past three years and have found the organization of the event to be the best that I have seen. These are small events compared to the many national events out there. The people that attend are respectful of the land and others. It has a long history in the bluegrass world which brings great press to the county.
- This July 4th, I stayed at the campground that formerly housed these events. It was disturbing to me the amount of day traffic allowed for tubing and the manner in which it was done. I would be much more concerned about the effect of that traffic in the water than two 3 day events. The amount of drinking and partying was incredible.

Jan Schilling

- My husband and I are big fans of Shepherds Ford. We have attended their well-run music festivals, and were terribly sad when they lost their venue.
- Please have no fear about their impact on the area, should they be allowed to relocate with you. The people running the events always showed great respect for the environment, and even a reference for the river. They are a most considerate group, and the attendees honor their expectations.

Janet Alger; Berryville

- This email is concerning an up coming agenda items on 12/15/2020 (PH 2020-06). My understanding a Special Event Permit application has been applied for on a 269 acre property, located on 1352 Tilthammer Mill road. My concerns with issuing a special event permit are: the amount of vehicular traffic in both directions on Tilthammer Mill road and the impact of the number of people (3500+) on the land. Also the wildlife and water quality of the river could be impacted. Please consider an in depth investigation of the impact before you vote on this proposed Special Event permit.

Janet Hamer

- The photo (12-5-2020 website) certainly shows the impact of RV vehicles (some enormous) arriving and exiting Watermelon Park that create grave danger to those of us who live and drive on the scenic byway Parshall Road.
- The conversion to RV camping sites at Watermelon Park will certainly make worse our plight here on Parshall Rd.
- Rafting (a commercial enterprise of Watermelon Park) makes the road along the river unnavigable!
- The Mcintire farm, sold in the Spring of 2020, cannot be allowed to be used as a campground and entertainment venue for nine events of 3,500+ (no cap). It is 10 times the size of Watermelon Park! Having lived so close to Watermelon Park, I simply cannot imagine the effect on the scenic byway 10 times the traffic will have.
- Clarke County should not become an entertainment venue. The county has admirably maintained its agricultural identity. This proposal is not only indefensible but immoral. The proposal will destroy our river, our wildlife and rural environment.

- Please do not accept this application.

John Rafter; Everett, PA

- It is my understanding that Shepard's Ford Productions has applied for two festival permits for 2021.
- I have attended numerous Shepard's Ford Production events over the last 10 years.
- The Permits should be approved for the following reasons:
 - Shepard's Ford Productions (hereafter referred as SFP) has a long standing track record in Clark County of providing quality events with zero or close to zero problems that required intervention by any level of local, state or Federal
 - government agencies.
 - SFP has always been a good environmental steward of the property they occupied and did everything necessary to ensure the cleanliness and safety of attendees and local residents.
 - Attendees to SHP events, as well as other tourist attractions, bring valuable revenue to local business, and also provide revenue to local and county governments through sales taxes.
 - Cultural events provide a community experience that goes beyond the actual length of the event and provide long lasting positive benefits.
 - SFP and its attendees provide charitable support to local causes.
 - SFP events in the past have strengthened and enhanced the music culture of the Clarke County Virginia area.
- Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Jonathan Smiley

- I have attended 2 events run by Shepherds Ford Production along riverfronts. They are a well-run and professional company that runs some of the smoothest operations around.
- They love the locations they choose and take all precautions necessary to protect the environment and respect the needs of nearby neighbors. Please allow Shepherds Ford to have events in Clarke county, we would love to be good guests.

Joshua & Sarah O'Donnell; Takoma Park, MD

- Over the years Shepherds Ford has partnered with and donated to multiple non-profits that help keep the river clean and spread awareness (including education at the events) about conservation and land and river stewardship. These organizations include Friends of the Shenandoah River, Piedmont Environmental Council, Shenandoah River Keeper, and the Downstream Project.
- Please support the great work Shepherds Ford does to provide us with amazing acoustic music each year at their festivals. These are truly family friendly events that are cherished by bluegrass and folk music lovers. I can say based on several years of experience attending the Watermelon Festival that the attendees of the festival truly respect both the event space, the environment, and the surrounding communities. The festival also offers an economic opportunity, as the festival attracts individuals from outside the county who frequent local businesses for meals, groceries, overnight accommodations and other amenities.

Julia Sargent

- Thank you for considering the permits for Shepherds Ford Productions' 2021 events. As an attendee of multiple events hosted by this organization, I would like to highlight the emphasis that Shepherds Fords Productions places on environmental respect and stewardship at every event they host. At their events held on the Shenandoah River, it is an inherent part of the culture for attendees to respect the river and be extremely mindful of leaving no trace. As such, I have never witnessed any litter or other degradation of the riparian environment as a result of these events. Rather, these events allow attendees to experience connection with the Shenandoah River, fostering a deeper appreciation of this vital natural resource and increasing their likelihood of adopting attitudes and practices of its stewardship.
- Shepherds Ford Productions has also partnered with and donated to multiple nonprofit river conservation organizations to further support the health of the Shenandoah River, and I trust, will continue to use its resources, both financially and interpersonally, to spread awareness about and further conservation efforts in the watershed.
- I urge the Board of Supervisors to approve the permits to allow this outstanding organization to continue to provide a platform for people to come

together in a respectful manner to appreciate music, the river, and their community.

- Thank you again for your consideration.

Lisa Gregory

- Hello! I am writing to you to ask for approval of the permits to hold watermelon festival in Clarke county once more. This is a family friendly festival that myself, my husband and young son have attended for the past 3 years and is truly and treasure for those who appreciate application culture and its music. As a musician, a mother and resident of the Shenandoah valley, exposing my children to the music of my ancestors and meeting with other like minded families has been wonderful. Please help to continue this tradition of gathering, learning and enjoying the beauty of the river. One of our favorite parts of this festival was sitting by the river and watching the children swim. Thank you!

Liz Callar; Lovettsville, VA

- I have gone to the last 2 years of the music festival and got to hear first classic music in an outdoor setting. I have dodged indoor concerts for years as I have protected my ears.
- I go with a friend that lives about 8 minutes away. Her brother has a camper and we join him there about 3:00. We walk around, have dinner, enjoy the feeling of happiness around us. I have been a total of 4 days and would love to be able to go again.
- I am 73 years old and live in Lovettsville, Va.

Mary Beth Kilmer; Shepherdstown, WV

- Hello! I am writing to endorse Shepherds Ford Productions for a permit for a music festival. I and my family have gone to every year of Watermelon Park Fest. It is a well run, safe, family friendly festival. They get the best talent in the country and showcase lots of local talent as well. There are always kids activities and people enjoy the river. Please, please, please grant them the permit. We all look so forward to this event every year. We have become a family. Thank you for your time.

Marlena Beach; Loudoun County, VA

- The purpose of this letter is to share with you mine and my families experience over the 10 years that we participated in the festival hosted by Shepherds Ford at Watermelon Park. The time spent camping, outdoors along the Shenandoah and listening the talent it would bring are nothing short of spectacular. For the Beach family it was a special, quality sort of time with friends and family that we would look forward to every year. The appreciation it has furthered in me in the resource Clarke County has in the Shenandoah River and its surroundings grows every year. The river stewards offered sessions that shared information about keeping the river clean and caring about the surroundings and the plants in those surrounding. Organizations like the Friends of the Shenandoah had a great opportunity at an event like this to spread awareness for their cause.
- Although we now live in Loudoun, my husband owns a business and property in Clarke and we started our family in Clarke County. We are strongly for and in favor of the event and the possibility of having in up stream. The attendees care about the cleanliness of the site and the "leave no trace" responsibility to the outdoors and are also generally after 11 pm.

Michelle Reese

- Please approve the 3 day permit for Shepherd1s Ford production. They are a wonderful and respectful production group that will bring commerce to the area. They are very mindful about the noise, trash and impact on the land and community. I have been to many events they have thrown.

Nancy and Randy Wolfinger

- As past attendees of the Watermelon Festival produced by Shepherds Ford Productions we would like to support the efforts to hold their music festival in Clarke County.
- Their past festivals have been well organized, family friendly and environmentally conscious. The opportunity to showcase traditional and new musicians is vital to the Blue Ridge music scene and reflects the pride Virginia has in its heritage. Over the years, Shepherds Forge productions have worked with and supported several non profits that focus on the health of the Shenandoah River.

- Please give Shepherds Ford Productions, their performers and their guests the opportunity to be a good neighbor while celebrating live music by granting the necessary permits from Clarke County.

Osa Olmert

- I have been a festival goer at Watermelon Park for many years now, both River and Roots and the Watermelon Park festival and I have found both festivals to be extremely clean, respectful of the grounds and environment and family friendly. It broke my heart that not only Covid affected this years fests, but that the venue was shut down to this traditional festival. I truly believe that the residents of Clarke county will be pleased to see that this production company hold to high standards and will not be let down should they be allowed to proceed- please consider allowing us to bless the space proposed- you will not be sorry!!

Paul Zeisset; Boyce

- I strongly oppose the application of Shepherds Ford Productions to hold events at 1352 Tilthammer Mill Road in Boyce.
- For more than 35 years, I have owned a 12.5 acre property in Calmes Neck Estates directly across the Shenandoah River from the proposed camping area.
- Calmes Neck Estates is an ecologically conscious community with restrictive covenants designed to protect the river. In addition, I have placed my land in an open-space easement to the Virginia Outdoors Foundation to protect the natural values of my property in perpetuity.
- This section of river was one of the first areas designated as a Virginia Scenic River, in 1979, three years before the designation was extended into the northern part of Clarke County, past Watermelon Park.
- This proposal threatens the integrity of the river bank along the length of the Niswander farm property. The owner of the farm tried to operate an illegal commercial campground last year and had to be warned by Clarke County to cease and desist. Stairways were cut into the dirt to facilitate camper access to the river, leading to erosion and in violation of regulations designed to protect the riparian buffer. Across the river, I could hear the noise from campers, and it was quite disturbing on weekends. The owner set up the campground without obtaining proper permits, and did not respond promptly to close it down when ordered to cease operations. I strongly believe that the

County should not facilitate the profit of an entrepreneur who shows so little respect for the rules and jurisdiction of Clarke County, much less for the integrity of our precious Shenandoah River.

- Shepherds Ford Productions and other entities planning events designed to attract large numbers of people should be directed to facilities where infrastructure, including parking, already exists, such as the Clarke County Fairgrounds, and to not destroy bucolic farmland nor the peace and quiet of our rural landscape.

Phil Bender; Takoma Park, MD

- I'm writing to support Shepherds Ford Productions in their application for a permit in Clarke County.
- I've brought my family from Takoma Park, MD, to at least six music festivals in the past at Watermelon Park, each time with my wife and daughter. These are wonderful, whole-family events. Over time we've gotten to know the area and now we return a few times a year to Berryville for concerts at the Barns of Rose Hill, shopping and dining (Boyd's Nest!). We wouldn't have discovered this area without Shepherds Ford.
- Thank you for your attention. Don't hesitate to reach out to me if you have further questions.

Rich Rodgers; Ashburn, VA

- Please consider and support Shepherds Ford Production hosting events along the river. The many years I've enjoyed past events at Watermelon Park have always been a significant part of my life and many others. It has always been the highlight bluegrass event in northern Virginia. Cancellation of the original location has left a void in bluegrass mountain culture so meaningful to this area. There will be a significant historical and cultural loss without such events.
- Your support in enabling the continuing musical gatherings such as this would be appreciated by residents both near and far.

Robert Chamberlin

- I write to you in support of the Shepherds Ford Production's applications to hold music events in 2021.
- The concern expressed by some that the events might be too loud and damage the environment are understandable. As an attendant at the Watermelon Park

Fests for many years, I can tell you that the Shepherds Ford Productions staff and volunteers do an excellent job of collecting and removing trash, providing clean restroom and shower facilities, respecting the sound ordinances and staffing with security personnel. There has also always been an emphasis on respecting the environment especially the river.

- I urge you to approve the Shepherds Ford Productions applications.

Roger Johnson

- It's my understanding that Shepherds Ford Productions has applied to you for permits for 2 events in 2021. I've been going to their festivals for many years and they are always well run, family friendly events. They are good stewards of the river both with donations and excellent clean up after the events. I'm sure they will take into consideration the concerns of neighbors and any issues that you may have. The people that come to their events are environmentally conscious and respectful of other peoples property. This is a family affair that we missed terribly this year and with Watermelon park no longer in the picture as a venue it would be nice to find a river front location.
- I'm hoping you will rule in their favor for the necessary permits.

Ryan Tibbens; Berryville

- I fear that this email is a day late, but I feel strongly on the issue and am compelled to write anyway. My name is Ryan Tibbens; I currently serve on the Berryville Planning Commission and previously served on the Board of Zoning Appeals. Since moving to Clarke County in 2012, I have fallen in love with our community, its beautiful natural surroundings, and our rich culture. One of my favorite cultural events has been Shepherds Ford's signature event, the Watermelon Park Fest. I was devastated when I learned that the event was going to be cancelled this year, and possibly permanently. I was upset both because my family attends every year (it's basically become an extra holiday for us) and because of what the loss means to our community. Hosting a music and arts festival like this helps to keep Clarke County on the map. It makes us a destination. Attendees frequent local businesses, enjoy our other recreation opportunities, and spread the word about what a great place our home is. I fear that losing this festival will represent a loss of culture and commerce, two areas that we all continually strive to grow. If we want Clarke County to continue to be a great place, if we want Berryville to truly represent "genuine

Virginia," then we need to stay connected to the musical and artistic influences that make our communities so vibrant.

- I fully support approving Shepherds Ford's new event and permitting. Please help them with their event and help our community to celebrate the arts. If you have any questions, I would love to talk more on this issue. Have a great weekend.

Sam Edland

- I can vouch that Shepherds Ford puts on a high quality event and was impressive stewards of the land at the 2019 Watermelon Park fest.
- Two of us set up our tent and camped right on the rivers edge about a half to quarter mile from the stage and couldn't hear the music from the river campspot. The bluegrass music just isn't a massive rock show that you'd get disturbing nearby neighbors. Also I should add it was a very family friendly event.
- Hope you let them have these 2021 events.

Sam, Kady, Lucy, and Davis Schrecongost

- I wanted to drop you a note in support of Shepherds Ford Productions application for events in Clarke County.
- My family and I have been attending Shepherds Ford produced festivals since my oldest was 6 months old, now 8 and actually a few years before then. They have always had a well organized, safe, clean and respectful event. They control access, attendance volume, and show hours to be certain that locals and festival goers alike are safe and respected.
- Our family urges you and any other Clarke county decision makers to consider their requests. I imagine these festivals bring a great deal of local revenue for the county as well as temporary jobs before, during and after each event.
- Thanks for your time and consideration.

Tara Ward

- I have attended every single Watermelon Park Festival except the very first one. For several years I was involved in running it. I count the Shepherds Ford folks as my friends, and the festival has always felt like family. That family was devastated when we learned that Watermelon Park would no longer host the

festival. I understand there is a potential new festival location, but that neighbors are concerned about environmental impact from the festival. Please be assured that Shepherds Ford, and indeed, most of the festival attendees, care deeply about the environment, and would endeavor to "leave no trace" or even leave the site in better shape than we found it.

- Watermelon Park Festival has been an annual tradition in Clarke County for 16 years. It has spawned and supported a rich musical and cultural tradition in the region, and brought an economic boost to the area. Please help keep these traditions strong and alive in Clarke County and surrounds.

Theresa Schottler

- Hello, I am just writing to ask that the board of Clarke County consider letting Shepherds Ford Productions continue to hold their events in town. I have gone to their festivals several times and truly believe they do a good job of maintaining a responsible environment for their attendants and the people who use the river and campground year round. They have a great organization of volunteers, especially those who are in charge of cleaning up the grounds before, during, and after the festival. I do not think they impact the river negatively, and the festival also brings more tourism to other spots in Clarke County. I hope you consider all the positive aspects of the festivals when making your decision.

Tony Reynolds; Berryville

- Shepherds Ford Productions has a long history of staging successful and environmentally sensitive events on the river.
- These events have brought responsible visitors to our county. The talented and accomplished musicians not only put on great shows but through many workshops past knowledge and skill to local musicians. Clarke County is has become known as a key region for music and these river events continue to solidify that image.
- These events bring good crowds of good people. We need to encourage and support them.

Warren Campbell

- I'm writing to you to enthusiastically support the permit of Shepherd1s Ford Bluegrass festival along the Shenandoah River.

- I spent the first 18 years of my life in Clarke County and Watermelon Park fest was a life changing yearly event for me.
- Seeing the amazing production team and musical talent brought to the river inspired me to pursue a career in music and a lifelong love of my hometown.
- I know that this event staying on the river would bring such vibrancy to our community and much needed business to the area impacted by coronavirus this year.
- Hope you take this into consideration and approve the permit for Shepherd1s Ford. They are some of the kindest most considerate people I have ever met.

William Gordon

- Just wanted to reassure you that, in the 5-6 years we attended the River and Roots and Watermelon Fest events, we were always impressed by how well they were run. There was never any trouble, they made sure that everything was cleaned up and that people respected the river, and the music was always of very high quality. Rest assured that these events will leave the environment the way they found it. They will be good neighbors.

Margaret Meenehan

- I have attended the Watermelon Park Music festivals for approximately ten years. I have found the crowds to be respectful and low key. This is a family friendly event and very well managed. The staff are visible, cordial, knowledgeable and strict. I have always felt safe and enjoyed listening to American roots and bluegrass music in a beautiful and peaceful setting. The promoters are vigilant environmentalists, with workshops on river conservation, etc. always in attendance. Please consider their request favorably for a new venue in which to continue this lovely summer tradition.

No Name Given

- Please allow Shepard's Ford to hold a musical event in your area. I have been attending their events for several years. They are well organized and orderly. They have always showed environmental respect for the river.

David Plater; Thibodaux, LA

- I am addressing this to you, Ms. Catlett, as the Millwood District representative on the Clarke County Board of Supervisors; and to you, Mr. Boise, as the Clarke County Administrator.
- Recently I was made aware of the application for a change of land use on The Island Farm, off of Tilthammer Rd. and near the north base of Vineyard Hill. My son Bryan Plater, who is a part owner of The Play Garden, down the road a short piece, has been filling me in on what is happening; he is addressing with the Board issues that he believes will relate to that property, which is under a conservation easement.
- I wanted to offer my own few comments before the planned Board meeting this coming Tuesday.
- My father was Richard C. Plater, Jr. In the late 1980s he donated to the Burwell-Van Lennep Foundation a sizeable tract of land across the Shenandoah River from the upper end of the Island Farm. It was his and the Foundation's hope that this wilderness property, connected to the existing Foundation lands, be protected for wildlife and wilderness uses forever. And that has been the case up to now.
- In my opinion, the proposed changes to the Island Farm from agriculture to entertainment and recreation are extensive and radical.
- Occurring so close to the Foundation property, there will be detrimental effects. Those are likely not just with respect to the Foundation's property but as well to the Shenandoah River, a Scenic River so-named under the laws of the State of Virginia.
- One more point: My connections to the county date to 1953, when our family acquired the Play Garden from Edward G. Butler, my father's uncle. Over the intervening years I have witnessed from our front porch that magnificent river change with the seasons and particularly with the weather. It rises with upstream rainfall during the year; the bottom lands that we see in three directions become flooded. Sometimes the water comes a third of the way up the high bluff on which stands the family house. Floods block traffic in all four directions and have inundated houses built anywhere near the river. The Island Farm is low elevation river bottom, as well. Any improvements along it are subject to the moods of the Shenandoah, at any time.
- Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Jeff Harris; Millwood

- I wish to voice opposition to Shepherds Ford Productions’ application for a performance venue on Island Farm off Tilthammer Mill Rd. The anticipated 3500 attendees hold promise for a traffic nightmare. The entrance to the farm off Tilthammer Mill is single lane for about 50 yards with no means of expansion given surrounding water and rock. It will be a bottleneck of cars, trucks, motorcycles, and RVs. Attendees who try to come in Ellerslie Rd will create a second bottleneck where that road intersects Clay Hill Rd and Tilthammer Mill Rd. Despite efforts to encourage people to arrive from Rt 50, many people with some local knowledge or guided by GPS will arrive via Clay Hill Rd. which is narrower than two lanes at spots with multiple sharp curves and hills that obscure drivers’ vision of oncoming traffic.
- On the Thursday opening of the venue and at the concert’s conclusion on Sunday the arrival and departure of up to 3500 people will produce bumper to bumper streams of vehicles for hours. For those of us who live along these roads it means the frequent inability to get out of or into our homes. Along many stretches of the access roads the shoulders are too steep for emergency vehicles to get by a logjam of vehicles which raises the added concern of EMS or fire trucks being unable to reach our homes in an emergency.
- Thirdly, I am concerned about the litter along these roads and who is going to clean it up. I walked Clay Hill Rd picking up trash for the first time when my son was working on a merit badge with the Boy Scouts. Over the thirty years since then I must have stopped on Clay Hill at least once a week to pick up beer and soft drink cans, fast food wrappers, and empty cigarette packages. We are told that construction workers from West Virginia use our road as a shortcut between Rt 340 and Rt 50 as they commute into Northern Virginia for work. They are apparently responsible for the litter. The proposed concerts will exacerbate the litter problem. Each night, after 14 hours of performances where alcohol is sold, one can only imagine the volume of litter as those who are not spending the night return to our roads to get up to Rt 340 or out to Rt 50.
- Finally, I urge you to turn down Shepherds Ford Productions’ proposal because of the noise. Their application indicates we will be subjected to 42 hours of amplified music for each of nine festivals over the next three years. The notion that they can mitigate the noise by how they orient the stage is absurd. There are neighbors on all four sides. Additionally, the vehicular traffic of 3500 people in pickup trucks, cars, RVs, and on motorcycles, particularly after the

music ends at midnight, will only add to a level of noise that the residents of Clarke County have avoided by living for decades in this farming community.

- Music festivals can be great fun and revenue sources for the county but Island farm is the wrong location.

Michael Williams & Susan Gallagher

- We have learned of an application for multiple large scale events at 1352 Tilthammer Road and we are writing to register our strong objection. The application covers two six day periods in 2021, 2022, and 2023 as well as unspecified single day events with estimated attendance of up to 3,500 per event. There are many reasons that these events are the wrong scale in the wrong place and, if they proceed, should be held at alternate locations equipped to handle crowds of this size safely and responsibly.
- *Safety*
- We live on Clay Hill Road just East of Route 255. We drive, run, walk, and ride bicycles and horses on Clay Hill Road. It is small with numerous blind spots and tight turns. Even in the best of conditions, anyone on the road has to be especially careful. It's hard to even imagine thousands of cars on Clay Hill and Tilthammer Roads over the course of these events. It is even harder to imagine that level of traffic not resulting in accidents and injuries and substantial delays, especially where the applicants will be serving alcoholic beverages.
- *Preserving Clarke County's special character.*
- Our county has a wonderful musical community and we love the fact that we are neighbors and friends with amazingly talented musicians. We want to support music in the county but not to the detriment of our rural and agricultural areas when there are safer and more suitable venues for festivals of this kind.
- Over the years, Clarke County has benefitted from visionary leadership and hard work that has preserved the rural and agricultural qualities of our county. Those efforts have been successful in large part due to balanced and thoughtful planning and land use regulation. We are grateful to the Board and the County staff for all you do to preserve the character of our community.
- Converting a farm on a narrow, quiet rural road in the middle of an agricultural area into an event venue for thousands of attendees will undermine years of effective planning and conservation efforts by Clarke County.
- *Confidence in Applicant*

- The application is incorrect, incomplete and misleading in several respects. The proposed events were not previously approved by the Board. Adjacent landowners were not all notified. The events would occur over six days on six different periods as well as other unspecified single day events with up to 3,500 attendees each. The drawings that accompanied the application were incomplete in several important aspects.
- In approving an application of this kind, the Board and community must have confidence that the promoter will live up to their many commitments necessary to ensure the events are safe and have minimal impact. This applicant has not demonstrated that they deserve that level of confidence. To the contrary, the incomplete plan provided makes it clear that these events will have severe adverse impacts on neighbors and the surrounding area.
- *Other Reasons*
- There are other reasons for these events not to be permitted at this scale or in this location – the adverse environmental impact, the demand on finite County public health and safety resources, onsite safety issues at a location with only one narrow access route, disturbance of a quiet rural area with abundant wildlife and numerous livestock, and the impact these events would have on neighboring landowners' peaceful enjoyment of their property.
- We urge the Board to disapprove this application and encourage the applicants to seek a more safe and suitable location.

Sally Neff; Winchester, VA

- As a former long time resident of Clarke County and now a property owner along the Shenandoah River, I am very conscious of our precious heritage and subsequent stewardship of the river. Spending time kayaking on the river just emphasizes to me how the ecosystem is both beautiful and fragile.
- Hearing of the proposed plan to hold large music festivals in a very pristine section of the river raises many red flags. Certainly the dangerous increase in traffic including campers and trucks on a narrow winding secondary road poses safety issues for local traffic as well as concert attendees.
- The abrupt influx of thousands of people who have no respect for the river's environment is another. People with no knowledge of the birds and wild animals whose home is along river could impart irreparable damage.
- Thousands of people accessing the river unsupervised will destroy the valuable riparian buffer that now provides protection for the land itself and the local

wildlife. The trash that will inevitably enter the river whether intentionally or unintentionally is reason alone to not allow the land to be used as a vendor for large events such as music festivals.

- I hope you hear our voices raised in opposition to the request to allow Shepherd’s Ford to hold their music events at this location. There are more suitable locations available such as the Clarke County Fair Grounds. Thank you for your consideration concerning the issue.

Winkie MacKay-Smith; White Post

- I am writing to you as the Supervisor of my district to object in the strongest terms to the event application for Island Farm.
- The Island Farm is a extremely vulnerable property due to its position in the Shenandoah river and the contaminant pollution danger to it. The access is very limited into the property not to mention the feeder road, Tilthammer Mill Road, which is narrow with steep hills and not built to accommodate heavy traffic. There are also conservation easements on both sides of the road which would preclude widening it. Dittos the Clay Hill Road which would bring traffic in from the north.
- Surely there are more appropriate sites in Clarke County for events of this size and duration.
- Our County officials and residents have worked for many years to conserve our water and agricultural/forestal lands AND to direct traffic and development to areas to support it. Island Farm is most certainly not such an area, and I strongly advise that the application be denied.

Barry Freeman; Boyce

- I would like to express my **opposition** to permit application PH 2020-06 for a campground and an event venue along the Shenandoah River in Clarke County on Tilthammer Road.
- Not only will an operation such as this have an environmental impact on a pristine section of our beautiful river with trash, pollution and runoff, but the huge crowds expected will present safety issues on the narrow roads that provides access to it's location. Not to mention, many other issues that will have a negative impact on our local community.
- I am not against holding events such as these but I just think that a property zoned for agricultural use is not the place for this. There are already

commercial venues within the county that were made and zoned for such events. Making money by holding these large events, with no regard for it's flora and it's fauna is in direct conflict as to why many of us moved to this community.

- Please do not allow this to happen to such a wonderful area where wildlife abounds and people enjoy the peace and tranquility of this remote area. Using the Shenandoah River as a festival type attraction will forever damage the conservation value of our river.
- I respectfully appeal to you to **not** grant this permit.

Bryan Plater

- I am writing this letter to express our grave concern of plans for the property of one of our neighbors per the recent event permit application for various music festivals on such property on Tilthammer Rd, in historic Clarke County. Our family has owned the property at the corner of Tilthammer Road and Clay Hill Road for over 110 years. Our property is otherwise known as The Play Garden. It is located just down the road and down river from the event permit application site.
- Generations of our family have worked to preserve the environment and tranquility of this unique place. Starting with the Ed Butlers in the early 1900s, maintained by the Richard "Dick" Platers from 1950s until his passing at the end of last century and now as descendants and current owners, we have all joined in the *efforts* of a significant portion of Clarke County residents to preserve the uniqueness of such an idyllic place. Only a few years ago, we put the property we own on this road and river into a conservation easement to preserve it forever. We are now extremely worried about commercial plan that will put this area at risk.
- My family members have spent countless hours on the roads that lead to this proposed event site. A young children, we would ride sideboard on Dick Plater's (my grandfather) truck, picking up any trash we could see on just about any trip taken to Millwood. It gave us an appreciation of preservation and how skinny this roadway remains. Any amount of cross traffic requires experience and caution. We want to continue to walk, run and bike on these roads without fear of being hit. Sometimes there are hours without a car going by, and that is a good thing due to the hills, thin lanes and curves to navigate.

- We are concerned about the following specifically from this type of event or extended RV parking in this area:
 - pollution of the roads and the river
 - extensive use of the banks of the river (causing erosion and other damage)
 - safety issues for access to the property for emergency personnel (a steep hill approach and thin drive into the event property)
 - safety for drivers due to so much traffic on the roads safety to residents and children using the roads during any such increase in traffic (especially high use by children at play in the same weather periods to be expected use by event permit)
 - potential mismanagement of sewage and other waste (on site, in the river, or on the roadway)
 - damage to roads and sides of roads (heavy traffic and necessity to drive on sides of roads in two way traffic with large vehicles)
 - noise, if not from the event, by the people attending coming and going
 - inadequate public safety to handle large crowd - who protects our families and property with such pressure
 - any other unforeseen changes to the landscape and way of life we have worked so long and hard to preserve
- The festivals may be argued to provide a short term financial gain for the area, but at what long term cost? Perhaps there are other more suitable and safe areas that could be used to increase visitation to the many Clarke County amenities in Millwood and in surrounding areas such as a the Berryville Fairgrounds or other such sites situated for larger gatherings and actual direct access to major roadways. This seemingly would provide benefits to the business community versus allowing the site (that should necessarily work to keep people on site) taking the primary financial benefits of visitors to the region.
- Visit our neighborhood by bike, by foot, by horse, or by a leisurely drive, but please don't make it a destination for RV's and hundreds and hundreds of drivers looking for an event or place to stay the night.

Dulany Morison, Chair VPHA

- The Virginia Piedmont Heritage Area Association advocates for the preservation of the extraordinary historic and cultural landscape of the Heritage Area which is comprised of five counties in the northern Piedmont

and Shenandoah Valley, including Clarke County. The swath of scenic river landscape included in this application (PH 2020-06) is known as "Whiting Farm" and its part of the "Greenway Rural Historic District" which is listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register and National Register of Historic Places. The property also fronts a Virginia-designated Scenic River and it is integral to the rural experience of Calmes Neck that Clarke residents treasure. Approving this application here would destroy this important preserved natural and historic setting. This is to say nothing of the safety concerns and negative environmental impacts that the proposed festivals would create in this rural corridor.

- Clarke has always had a great reputation for defending historic, scenic, and cultural resources and protecting open space and agricultural efforts. The Virginia Piedmont Heritage Area urges the Board not to allow this application to proceed, in the interests of protecting that strong legacy set by Clarke County to keep the ridges, mountains, river, and historic settings intact. One of the most important resources in Clarke County are the bends and scenic twists of the Shenandoah River, including the Calmes Neck area. Losing those features to overwhelming commercial endeavors will impact the scenery, setting, and landscape of Clarke County immeasurably, as well as attract similar inappropriate threats to the area.

Joan Fine; Winchester

- Norm and I are strongly opposed to the Event Application submitted for the Island Farm. We believe there are significant traffic and safety issues, including narrow, hilly, and curvy access roads with blind overs. We are aware of three accidents in front of our house-one fatal. There also appears to be inadequate ingress and egress for fire and rescue. Additionally, we believe this proposed use poses a danger of damage to the Shenandoah River; the land is low and flat and allows easy access to the river, to say nothing of the pollution such use could cause.
- We ask you to vote "No" on the Event Application for the Island Farm.

Will Robinson

- I know you've received letters from my Plater cousins but I just wanted to chime in as well. My connection to Clarke County is from growing up and living here during the summers and now being a co-owner of the Play Garden with

my cousins. I also have been active in the local history as a board member of the Clarke County Historical Association for 8 years, including serving as President for 2 years, and am still on the building and grounds committee for the Mill.

- I realize that I would be considered a NIMBY since the proposed site of the festival is not too far down Tilthammer Mill Rd from our house, but I would be writing this letter regardless of where I lived in Clarke County. What I have always loved about the county I believe is at stake here. I can only imagine what a hard job it is to balance growth with conservation , but I have always admired CC for the excellent job it does with the help of good governing, conservation easements and involved residents.
- In this case, there are the obvious traffic issues and accessibility to the property, which is a completely different scenario from Watermelon Park where you can reach the site along straight flat roads for quite some distance. This site is only accessible from very hilly windy roads that lack visibility and width for large vehicles to pass. I hold my breath every time I reach the top of some of those hills during the day when you can't see headlights. Over the years I have witnessed two very bad accidents from the Play Garden porch at the 90 degree turn where Clay Hill Rd meets Tilthammer.
- Also , I can already see from our porch where the owner of the property has cleared almost all the trees out on the river (which I'm guessing he may have done first then asked forgiveness) in anticipation apparently of having an RV park and the music festivals. The health and sanctity of the river are now very much at risk it would appear. And my question would be for what gain to the county? If the festival was at the fairgrounds then at least there would be some economic benefit that would surely spill over to Berryville and the surrounding area. However in a location like this people go there in their RVs , park them , and don't leave. And they bring their provisions with them. So we lose on the environment, traffic, vehicle accidents, noise, trash, etc. but gain nothing but being able to say we are a cool county that hosts multiple music festivals...doesn't sound like a good trade off to me.
- Thank you very much for indulging me and reading my concerns, and I will be hoping for a vote against this proposal.

George Ohrstrom; Berryville

- As Chair of The Clarke County Planning Commission, I'd like to offer a few thoughts from a planning perspective about The Clarke County Special Events Permit process.
- If the county is going to have event promoters thinking about having large festivals (3500 people plus) in the Agricultural Open Space zoned area , I think The county might want to have The Planning Commission's input on a "model" ordinance.
- I would be happy to volunteer to set up a committee of the Commission to work on that, if the Board of Supervisors think it a good idea.
- With that sized events, some serious thought needs to take place about entrance/egress issues in regard to emergency services, and about the size of roads these festivals should be on.

George Ohrstrom; Berryville

- Good Evening to you All: My name is George L. Ohrstrom and I live in Clarke County. I want to thank the Board of Supervisors and The Clarke County Administrator, Mr. Chris Boies for the opportunity to make comments electronically during this pandemic..
- I think the use of Island Farm as a venue for a large Music Festival several times a year are is a terrible idea. If one jumps to a "worst case scenario", the possibility of tragedy is easily visualized.
- On the Friday night of the festival say around 11:PM one of those really strong super cell thunderstorms comes through and drops 3 inches of rain. The single lane entrance rd. will turn into a muddy, bottomless, nightmare with cars trucks etc. sliding all over and driving around each other.
- Then on Saturday afternoon something happens at one of the food vendors tent and there is a serious fire, with absolutely no access for emergency vehicles in or out.
- The festival at this location could be an absolute disaster!
- Why not move it to a location that is setup for it, such as The Ruritan where the same festival moved to in 2018 when the river flooded. While I'm sure the above mentioned thunderstorm would mess up the Ruritan road to some extent, at least there are 2 points of entrance and egress.
- Again I Thank you all for the opportunity to share my thoughts

Charles & Blanca Vandervoort; Boyce

- We are Charles and Blanca Vandervoort commenting on the proposed campground/festival venue at River Farm. We live directly across the Shenandoah River from River Farm in the Calmes Neck community and have owned our property since 1983.
- In 1979, a 21.6-mile reach of the Shenandoah River in Clarke County from the Warren-Clarke county line to the Virginia line was designated as the Shenandoah State Scenic River, a component of the Virginia Scenic Rivers System (Virginia DCR 2020, Va. Code§ 10.1-417). "In a nutshell, Scenic River designation constitutes official recognition of the natural, scenic, historic and recreational values of some of Virginia's most valuable riverine resources and provides them with a measure of protection not afforded other rivers. In addition, it gives riparian landowners and other local citizens a stronger voice in any government action or decisions that have the potential to impact 'their' river" (Virginia DCR 2018).
- As riparian landowners along the Shenandoah State Scenic River (River), we voice our opposition to the proposed campground/festival venue at River Farm for the reasons described below, not the least of which is that we, and other present and former Calmes Neck landowners, have spent decades working to restore and protect the natural and scenic values of the Shenandoah River for ours and future generations and feel that the proposed campground/festival venue at River Farm has the potential to negatively impact the River through 1) negative ecological effects on the River 2) negative effects on local wildlife and wildlife habitat and 3) negative visual/sound effects on Calmes Neck residents.
- 1. Negative Ecological Effects
- For over a decade, Charles Vandervoort actively supported the efforts of the Friends of the Shenandoah River (FOSR) through volunteer work including river monitoring, scientific research, and water quality analysis. Based on his 2007 report on the water quality in the Shenandoah River Watershed (Vandervoort 2007), one of the major threats to the River is pollution in the form of sediment, coming from development projects that disturb land without protecting exposed soils.
- Many years ago, a previous landowner of the McIntire Farm (now River Farm) mitigated a section of the riparian buffer by installing a fence to prevent his cows from accessing the River and thus successfully restored sensitive riparian habitat which would otherwise have continued down a trajectory of bank

erosion and detrimental impacts to water quality. It is for this same reason that we are concerned about the proposed campground/festival venue at River Farm -we believe that human activities of the magnitude of 3,500+ people and perhaps 1,000 vehicles on the floodplain at River Farm will have a negative impact on water quality in the River, amongst other impacts. High amounts of vehicle traffic in the floodplain and heavy foot traffic in riparian buffer areas (for river-access) can damage vegetation, which helps to protect topsoil from erosion and safeguards the integrity of the floodplain. Several times a year (personal observation), heavy rains can cause the River levels to rise and inundate the floodplain. This flooding, combined with eroded areas in the floodplain and riparian buffer areas, can quickly wash away unprotected topsoil and add high amounts of sediment to the River. Not only does higher sediment affect the local water quality, but it also impacts areas downstream. Fran Endicott, a visionary and former Calmes Neck resident, strongly advocated that the Shenandoah river qualified as a State Scenic River. I remember Fran's bumper sticker on her car "We All Live Downstream", meaning that whatever happens in the watershed it would affect people, wildlife, and plants downstream. So, it is incumbent to all of us to keep the water quality in good shape. The Chesapeake Bay downstream needs protection from erosion runoff like that described above.

- **2. Negative Effects on Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat**
- In addition to recreational values such as boating, fishing and swimming, the Shenandoah River also provides increasingly rarer opportunities for observing and enjoying nature, including iconic scenery and wildlife. As longtime residents, we have felt much pride in seeing the recovery of the Bald Eagle firsthand along the River, from its former status as an endangered species to a healthy population that now nests in the mature trees along the shoreline of this River. Unfortunately, loud noises and bright lights from the proposed activities can disturb wildlife and lower the quality of their habitat. For these reasons, Calmes Neck residents adhere to low light levels to protect wildlife and their habitat.
- Many properties adjacent to River Farm and close by are under conservation easement, including a large 280- acre property owned by the Burwell vanlennep Foundation, and several other properties owned by our neighbors in Calmes Neck. This network of protected lands along the River corridor also

provides ecological value in the form of "habitat connectivity," which allows plants and animals a broader range within which to thrive.

- Some of these conservation easements also protect rare or imperiled plant species. The Virginia DCR, Natural Heritage Division, through encouragement and visionary foresight by former Calmes Neck resident, Fran Endicott, compiled a plant list that includes outstanding natural communities of five rare plants and three uncommon plant occurrences, many occurring along a narrow fringe of habitat at the River's edge with the riparian buffer zone. These plant species documentations are of regional significance and the Virginia Native Plant Society leads an annual walk educating our neighbors of these species' importance. Wildlife, including bird, habitat is also protected by these conservation easements. Fran Endicott also started the Calmes Neck faction of the Christmas Bird Count, a long-standing nationwide program of the National Audubon Society. Bird documented at Calmes Neck have included waterfowl sightings on the Shenandoah River. This Calmes Neck tradition continues to this day.
- **3. Negative Visual/Sound Effects**
- Recognition of the natural and scenic attributes of the River is included in the Scenic River designation. As such, some of the natural and scenic attributes of the River may be negatively impacted by the proposed campground/festival venue at River Farm, namely as a result of the loud noises and bright lights, which do not add audibly or visually attractive features to the river. An unobstructed night sky, as seen from the River, is also a natural and scenic attribute, and the visual impacts of the proposed activities on human observation of the night sky should not go uncounted.
- In summary, we thank you for considering our point of view. Please consider the potential detrimental effects the intense human activities associated with the proposed campground/festival venue at River Farm may have on the floodplain and the environment, including negative impacts to the integrity of the floodplain, water quality, special habitat and wildlife.

Anne Caldwell; Bluemont

- I am writing to you as a private citizen of Clarke County, not in my capacity as a Planning Commissioner.
- The over-riding concern with this application is the health, welfare and safety of the citizens of Clarke and the Commonwealth of Virginia. It is to this end

that the Special Event Ordinance of Clarke County has been developed, in concordance with the laws of Virginia.

- The safety of citizens is seriously in doubt with this proposal, regarding two issues. The first is the entrance off Tilthammer Mill Road accessing the driveway to the property. It is a hilly and winding road, with very poor sight distance to the entrance of the property, particularly for the volume of traffic likely. The VDOT permit is pending.
- The second safety issue is the narrow one-lane driveway on the property itself. For a significant length along this drive, there is no room for two vehicles to pass and no easy way to widen the driveway because of topography. Access of fire and EMS vehicles to the event site is likely to be severely compromised because of the narrow width of this single entrance.
- The Special Event Ordinance requires that the subject property comply with all zoning regulations. The camping proposed would constitute use as a campground. This requires a Special Exception Permit from the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors. There is no such Special Exception Permit in place.
- Environmental concerns with this site are significant. The Shenandoah River waterfront will be very attractive for recreation to the 3500 people expected to attend. If there are no formal access points to the river, the riverbank will be subject to serious degradation.
- Construction of formal access points to the river require compliance with our Stream Protection Overlay District regulations. No such plans are included in the current application and no such plans have been submitted to the Zoning Office.
- The proposed parking lot is located adjacent to Spout Run. This is a significant perennial stream. Noted past efforts have been made to repair the stream bank vegetative buffer along its length, as well as efforts to exclude livestock from the stream. A parking area for potentially thousands of cars adjacent to this stream buffer zone will only impair all the past efforts to restore this stream to non-polluted viability.
- The Covid pandemic will not be over by the summer of 2021. The application should include affirmation that any guidelines or mandates for large gatherings issued by the state health officials will be followed, including potential cancellation of the event.

- In closing, I would strongly encourage the applicants to consider another site for the event. The fairgrounds seem a logical choice because of many fewer site-specific problems.

Barbara Byrd; Berryville

- What is proposed for the Island Farm is completely out of whack with the use of the property's 269 acres of excellent agricultural land.
- Additionally, there is poor access to the area which is very close to neighbors. The proposed change of use will negatively impact and drastically change the entire area, not just the land of the applicant. If this application is granted, it will create problems that are unacceptable to the population and establishments that have existed in that area and co-existed in harmony for years.
- As a resident of Clarke County since 1950, a landowner and a taxpayer, I am firmly opposed to this application and support the fact sheets researched and submitted by John Staelin and Robina Rich Bouffault.

Beatrice von Gontard, Board Chair, The Blue Ridge Wildlife Center; Boyce

- On behalf of the board of The Blue Ridge Wildlife Center, I would like to voice our opposition to the proposed Event Center on Island Farm.
- First of all, we have concerns from a traffic safety standpoint involving rescuers bringing injured animals to us at our entrance off Tilthammer Mill Road. Additionally, we have many visitors coming to enjoy our Wildlife Walk and Nature Programs including school children in buses. This would involve a safety hazard if campers and other large vehicles were using the same road as people accessing our Wildlife Center.
- Secondly, the noise from the traffic and the loud music and crowds associated with the campground would have a negative impact on the rehabilitation of our birds and animals who are kept in enclosures prior to their release. We also have a number of wildlife ambassadors who are permanently injured and, therefore, can never be released. These include a Bald Eagle, Peregrine falcon, and a variety of other birds, mammals, amphibians and reptiles. Wildlife can be easily traumatized by loud noise, especially when they cannot getaway from it.
- Finally, The Blue Ridge Wildlife Center sits on land that is leased from the Burwell Van Lennep Foundation, whose entire property is under conservation

easement. We would hate to see any of this land negatively impacted from a conservation standpoint, i.e. river bank erosion and pollution or littering of the land or waterways, including oil or gas spills, or food or trash that can sicken or endanger wildlife.

- We urge you to consider these concerns as outlined above. Please distribute this letter to the Clarke County Board of Supervisors for the record.

Laurie Volk; White Post

- I submit this statement in opposition to the Special Event Application of Shepherds Ford Productions, LLC (the "Application") proposed for Island Farm at 1352 Tilthammer Mill Road in Boyce. I have been a resident of Clarke County for over 25 years. Recently, I purchased Huntover Farm off Redgate Road in White Post, 160 acres with significant frontage on the Shenandoah River. I am a member of the County's Board of Zoning Appeals. To my understanding, there have been many expressions of support for the Application from non-residents of Clarke County. It is my hope that statements from County residents carry more weight with the Board of Supervisors. I respectfully request that this statement in opposition be made part of the public record.
- There are numerous issues of broad concern in the Application:
- (1) Too Many People. The Application proposes as many as 3,500 attendees at three music festivals per year over three years. As set forth in the Shepherds Ford Productions 2012 Event Plan ("SFP Plan") attached to the Application, total daily attendance including staff could be as high as 3,750. See SFP Plan at page 2. That is equivalent to 25% of the County's entire population, which was approximately 14,619 in 2019, attending an event on a single day at one location. Such numbers are excessive;
- (2) Loss of Agricultural Land. The proposed venue location at Island Farm is situated on prime agricultural land that until recently has been operated as a farm. It is regrettable that the new landowner proposes events that are inconsistent with the County's Comprehensive Plan that seeks to promote and preserve agriculture. Approving the Application would result in the loss of 269 acres of agricultural production at Island Farm;
- (3) Too Close to the River. The proposed venue is situated too close to the Shenandoah River, one of Clarke County's outstanding scenic and natural resources. The Shenandoah River is an exceptional resource but it is also a fragile one. Large events like those proposed in the Application would no

doubt have negative impacts on the river. The river frontage at Island Farm is unfenced along the riverbanks. In the hot summer, and possibly under the influence of alcohol, it would be difficult to prevent attendees from getting in the river to swim and cool off. No precautions to prevent this were set forth in the Application. The river banks are steep in places and there are no approved public access points to the river along Island Farm's frontage, creating serious safety concerns for attendees. Furthermore, such a concentration of attendees would no doubt result in trash accumulation, degradation of the water quality and erosion of the riverbanks.

- (4) Too close to Blue Ridge Wild Life Center. The proposed venue is too close to the adjacent Blue Ridge Wildlife Center, a widely supported and state licensed facility. Wildlife is rehabilitated there and the Center provides educational programs for the public. The large-scale events proposed would disturb the rehabilitation efforts, disrupt the access to the Center from Tilthammer Mill Road for visitors and employees alike, and affect the Center's ability to carry out its mission. Furthermore, that stretch of the Shenandoah River provides significant habitat for many kinds of animals and birds, including the American Bald Eagle, a protected species.
- (5) Creates traffic and Safety Issues on Roads. There are numerous problems related to traffic, safety and access to the proposed venue site. Tilthammer Mill Road is a two-lane Virginia scenic byway that twists along the Shenandoah River with numerous blind curves. With the numbers anticipated at the events, traffic is likely to backup and stack. It would be very dangerous to come around a bend at 45mph and encounter a backup. The dramatically increased traffic and backups on event days will greatly inconvenience residents who use the road daily. The approval from VDOT submitted with the Application is conditional upon there being no impediments to through traffic and no backups created. Backups will be inevitable.
- (6) Inadequate Ingress and Egress. The ingress to Island Farm is a narrow farm entrance. Heavy use by vehicles such as campers, RVs, and trucks with supplies, in addition to passenger cars, will take its toll. It would be problematic to expand the entrance because of the geography which features an adjacent stream and rock cliff. There is only one way in and only one way out, generally a recipe for disaster at large events. It does not appear that vehicles can enter and exit the entrance at the same time. There is no easy way for emergency vehicles such as firetrucks or rescue squads to enter and

exit quickly. In the event of heavy rain, vehicles could be stuck in the mud creating additional delays. With the possibility of 3,500 attendees there will be tremendous traffic on Tilthammer Mill Road on event days. At best local residents will be inconvenienced, at worst the traffic and backups will result in truly unsafe conditions.

- (7) Loud Music and Bright Lighting. As set forth in the SFP Plan at page 4/4, the music will be amplified. Even if the applicant observes the Clarke County sound ordinances, sound travels differently under different weather conditions and the ordinance would be difficult to enforce. The amplified music is likely to create noise pollution for local residents on Tilthammer Road, for landowners across the river and disturb wildlife along the river. Similarly, the festival will require special lighting creating light pollution for local residents on both sides of the river and for wildlife. There are no details in the Application addressing how the lighting will be shielded so as to prevent "unreasonable glow" beyond the venue. See Application, page 7/9. Homeowners have a right to the quiet enjoyment of their property and that enjoyment would be jeopardized by loud and illuminated three-day music festivals that run from 10:00 am until 11:59pm.
- (8) Few Benefits but Many Costs to County. Taken as a whole, there are apparently few economic benefits to the County associated with the proposed events. Attendees are coming to hear music for the day, enjoy food and alcohol sold on the premises, even camp out and spend the night. They are unlikely to shop, dine or spend the night at local establishments. At best, an attendee might buy a tank of gas and a coffee at Dunkin Donuts, hence resulting in little tax revenue benefitting the County. However, there will no doubt be costs to the County associated with the events for additional services provided by the sheriffs office as well as fire and rescue squads.
- (9) Technical sbortcomine:s with Apolication. In addition to the conceptual issues outlined above, there are several technical problems with the Application as submitted There are numerous misstatements of fact:
 - a) No musical events at Island Farm venue have been approved by the Board of Supervisors. Special event applications have been approved for musical events at Watermelon Park but not at this proposed location. Application at page 1/9; and
 - b) There is no evidence that the notices to surrounding landowners were received and no evidence that neighbors across the river were contemplated

as adjacent landowners although they too will be impacted by the events. Application at page 4/9. There also numerous inadequacies in the information provided in the Application including:

- c) Detailed scaled drawings are required to be submitted with the Application. The rough diagram submitted with the Application is grossly inadequate and does not address the details set forth in the Application at page 2/9;
- d) In the Application at page 7 /9 the applicant indicates no additional safety services are required beyond that offered by public agencies. In events of this size it is difficult to imagine that no additional services will be required. Consequently, the burden would fall on Clarke County public services entirely. Additional safety services would no doubt be required and details must be provided.
- e) Adequate on-site medical service and emergency transport vehicles services are required. Application at page 5/9. The SFP Plan proposes "a tented area with unobstructed egress to the county road". SFP Plan t page 3/4. However, as noted above, there are serious problems with the ingress and egress to Island Farm.
- Based on all of the above, the proposed musical festivals at Island Farm are wholly inappropriate for Clarke County and there are numerous technical problems with the Application as filed. Even if all the issues were adequately addressed, I would urge the Board to deny it. There are other more suitable venues in the County such as the Ruritan Fairgrounds that has experience hosting large events, adequate parking, safe ingress and egress, and close proximity to major roadways. Given the rural, agricultural, environmental and scenic values treasured in our County, and enshrined in the Comprehensive Plan, the Application should be denied.

Susan Galbraith; Boyce

- Besides the obvious increase in traffic on roads not designed for such; besides the explosion of city-noise along a river that MANY people visit in order to hear only the sound of nature; besides the increase in trash and garbage strewn along the roads, and into the river, there is another reason this “park” should not be given the go ahead.
- Converting the Island Farm property into an event center like Watermelon Park will continue the destruction of habitats and ecosystems that we (the public) are just becoming aware of how important they are to the overall

health of the river, and thus our water supply. These natural ecosystem buffers play a vital role in erosion control that help to prevent flooding, loss of topsoil, and chemical and animal feces runoff into the river. It has also been shown that natural ecosystems are efficient at filtering out toxins dumped for years by human industry into the rivers. In the full scope of the river, this is but a small remaining natural section, but the chipping away of such areas, is creating the ever-growing accumulative negative effect. Though this is a Clarke County decision, that decision impacts people, animals and plants up and down the whole of the river. As human population soars, water is becoming more and more precious. Do we really want to continue to jeopardize the water of our river by adding another unnecessary event center on its banks?

- “Plans to protect air, water, wilderness, and wildlife are in fact plans to protect man.” Stewart Udall, Secretary of the Interior 1961-69
- Let’s FINALLY begin to enact these plans and not go ahead with this “park”.

John Morgan, Karen Morgan, Neil Johnson, and Elizabeth Johnson; Boyce

- As property owners in Calmes Neck Estates, we strongly oppose the application for a series of commercial events for this property. This activity would be very detrimental to our community and the sensitive river environment, and is an unacceptable venue for the proposed events.
- We enjoy the quiet beauty of our home in Clarke County with an expansive, rural view. In fact, it is quiet enough that we enjoy hearing the cows on the property in question. As a result, we are concerned about the significant negative visual impact as well as the noise from amplified music and pollution (for example from gas generators and diesel powered lighting) which will drift with the prevailing winds toward our property.
- We appreciate the need for gatherings of this sort but would strongly encourage the Board keep festivals at existing venues such as the Clarke County fairgrounds which are better suited for such activities.
- We did note with concern the RV Campers located on this property over the summer in our direct view as well as the damage that was caused to the riparian buffer zone along the length of the property to create river access down the steep bank. We regularly use the river for kayaking and between the campsites and the destruction of vegetation, this property is not in keeping with the surrounding environment and we are deeply concerned about the greater impact of 3,500 attendees on the Shenandoah River and Spout Run.

- We urge you to permit no further expansion of commercial activity here and deny the application for the Large Special Event Permit at this location.

Gerome Garver pointed out to the Board of Supervisors that many people believe that this event will be held on Island Farms. It will not be held on Island Farms. Island Farms is a neighboring farm that is a land trust operated by a Board of Trustees. The farm that it would be held on is River Farm. Wanted that clarifications in the record.

Chris Boies informed the Board that there were 265 letters received, some of which was just heard. There were 182 people for the event, 81 that were against the event, and one (1) that had concerns but did not state an opinion. Tried to track from the letters of those who were residents of Clarke County. The ones that were clear to be Clarke County residents: 18 were for the event, 77 were against the event, and the one person had concerns. For the non-residents: 64 were for the event and two (2) were against it. There were 102 that had unknown residencies; 100 were for the event and two (2) were against.

Chair Weiss stated that if it suits the Board, it is clear that we have heard from enough residents both here and through writing, advocate closing the public hearing.

By consensus, the Board members agreed to close the public hearing.

At 8:15 pm, Chair Weiss closed the Public Hearing.

Chair Weiss thanked the people in attendance and the ones viewing for taking the time and all of their efforts to work on sending in comments to the Board.

Thanked all Clarke County residents for their conscientious of the safety rules that are set to fight the pandemic with; believe Clarke County has done relatively well, considering the status of the rest of the Country and the World. Complemented the attitude of Clarke County residents, all keep continuing to smile and work with each other. Wanted to take the opportunity to thank you personally and from the Board of Supervisors as well; for all of the sacrifices; adding that we will get through it; please keep up the good fight.

Supervisor Lawrence asked if property owners own to the edge of the river or the middle of the river. Chris Boies stated that typically the State owns the river. Adding that County Administration notified adjoining property owners including those on other side of the river of the public hearing. Chris Boies explained that that was in a different manner than the applicant did at the beginning of the process.

Supervisor Lawrence stated that the comments in the packet were mostly against the event, but in the new comments that came in it has many people who attend the concerts and support the event.

Supervisor Lawrence opined that he goes every now and then and it is a great festival, it is well run and organized. Added that the year it was held at the fairgrounds it was great. There certainly are problems with this location.

Vice-Chair McKay stated that this event is an asset to Clarke County to have but with that being said, I do think that this location is absolutely dismal with things that cannot be fixed. The ingress and the egress are roughly 20 feet wide on a farm lane and there is nothing that can be done to solve that problem. I cannot support this application because of the location. Believe there are other locations in Clarke County that are much better. Feel that this is a disaster waiting to happen if you have it down that narrow lane because people cannot get in and out if something happens; for examples a tent is on fire or someone has a heat stroke; there is no way to get the rescue squads in there. Getting in and out is my number one (1) concern. Vice-Chair McKay added that the river access is also poor and pretty much non-existent.

Supervisor Lawrence stated that he took a tour of the property and asked if parking would be on the field on the left as you come in. Trevor Creany answered yes there will be a road to the big parking area shown on the map. Trevor Creany explained that for the stage no specific direction has been discussed, would be willing to work with the County if there was a specific direction that you wanted the stage to face. Trevor Creany then explained that for the camping it would be filled from front to back so no one is a mile away.

Supervisor Bass asked the applicant for his perspective on the ingress and egress issue. Trevor Creany stated that in all honesty he agrees that the ingress and egress is an issue. The owner said he has the ability to widen the road if that was a contingency on the approval. Further explained that the owner stated that he would use a backhoe to cut into the hill to widen the area and pave the entrance. Chair Weiss expressed that it will take more than a backhoe. Trevor Creany explained that the owner is willing to widen the road if that is a contingency.

Supervisor Lawrence asked and Trevor Creany explained that the single-day events, it was always put into the Watermelon Park permit applications; it was just for the instance that somebody wanted Shepherd's Ford Productions to do a one-day event; was a way to save the day just in case instead of having to applying for a bunch of different events permits.

Supervisor Lawrence questioned the single-day event again; Trevor Creany stated that on behalf of shepherd's Ford Productions, would be willing to remove the single-day event from the application if that was a contingency. Those are really put into the application so the whole process does not have to be done if someone wants a one-day event at that location.

Supervisor Lawrence questioned and Trevor Creany confirmed that families attend both of the festivals.

Supervisor Catlett opined that there are a lot of concerns, some have already been stated. One concern is the camping scenario, it is not zoned for this site where it was grandfathered in at Watermelon Park. Trevor Creany stated that he has personally applied for many permits through different companies for other events; they have been approved and there was camping at those events. Trevor Creany added that he honestly did not think that would be an issue. Supervisor Catlett stated that that need to be addressed.

Supervisor Catlett explained that a second concern is the entrance, even if it could be widened it still will not change the fact that it is still near the bridge and the curve; so still a challenge.

Supervisor Catlett explained that it is stated in the application that the integrity of the river would not be compromised. Questioned how it could not be compromised since it is a much larger area compared to Watermelon Park. Adding that there is documentation that there are many eagles and other wildlife beside the wildlife center and the noise will have a large impact on the wildlife. This will be multiple days were they would be impacted and with wildlife hard to reverse that negative impact.

Supervisor Catlett expressed that the sheer numbers; personally a vision that if you had the 3,750 people; that is approximately 85% of Berryville. Adding that if 85% of Berryville drove to that location that would be problematic especially the travel trailers and with not all coming in at the same time.

Trevor Creany explained to the Board that when it was held at Watermelon Park; strived not to get Lockes Mill road blocked. The blockage was from people trying to get there on Tuesday morning for the prime campsites. To avoid that blockage did a 9 am start time but allowed people to enter as early as 6 am right after the ticket both arrived. Adding that the proposed property has approximately a mile of road off the main road where cars line; which is a lot more room then at Watermelon

Park. Further explained that there are 2,000 people who stay all weekend, out of those some do go home if they are local but a majority stay on the property. Sell roughly around 2,000 camping passes, so for the single-day passes we sell up to 1,500 or the entire weekend. Therefore, Saturday there is usually 750 people coming with the single-day pass; in addition to the 2,000 campers. It is not 3,500 people all coming in at one time. This is why there has never been a huge issue at Watermelon Park with cars being backed up.

Supervisor Catlett explained that as the neighbor, it may not be 3,500 people all at one time, but it is 3,500 people total spread out over a few days. So it is not just one tough day for the neighbor it is a few days with the traffic. Trevor Creany stated that the cars will always be moving there will not be a standstill. Supervisor Catlett expressed that with the curves and the hill it would be a challenge.

Supervisor Bass asked if there would be a line of cars along the river to go to a separate parking area; Trevor Creany explained that it may not necessarily be by the river still looking at all of the options. Trevor Creany further explained that there is approximately a mile of road that can be used to line cars and get cars on the property before we even have to worry about a backup of Tilthammer Mill Road. The ticket booth will not be right at the intersection of Tilthammer Mill Road and the property; it will be inside the property.

Chair Weiss stated that Watermelon Park Fest was successful and have great respect for Shepherd's Ford Productions. There were rocky time at the beginning of Watermelon Park Fest; there was traffic issues, noise issues, staging, and river frontage issues. The same issues that are presented at this proposed location. Watermelon Park was a much smaller site; the Board worked with property owner and Shepherd's Ford Productions to fix those problems. The big benefit is that there was a big road to keep people moving and you did have very little backup because you had a site to put them on. Watermelon Park spoiled you because it worked, and it worked beautifully. The application is not sufficient it does not answer the questions that it should have answered. All the explanations from tonight are not laid out or said in the application. Should have addressed the issues in the application because it is asking for very large events at the maximum; understand that it was felt that Watermelon Park Fest could be moved to this site and it would run well because Shepherds Ford Productions does a good job; that is a reasonable assumption. With the application the job is to convince the Board that all of the issues can be mitigated. Adding that land use decision are not based on who is applying, they are based on what is being done to the land. The Board has great respect for you but it is not particularly relevant that you believe you could run an event and mitigate some of the issues.

Chair Weiss stated from his point of view, you cannot mitigate with a backhoe or not; you cannot mitigate how to get emergency vehicles into that site. River Farm will get wet when it rains, going to have people bogged down, if you have a bad weather during the event, event with all of the great planning, there is no way to get people in and out; people will be bogged down on the site and it will overwhelm you, our emergency services. This Board in my view cannot support something that has that much risk to the population whether from here or not.

Chair Weiss expressed the camping concern; in past personal view was that the auxiliary camping was on parcel with the event festival days. Conveyed that John Staelin is correct that the Code of Clarke County does not state that but believe that was the Boards view. In this application asking for two (2) separate days of strictly camping that does not coincide with the music. The Board currently could not approve that because that does require a special use permit.

Chair Weiss explained that in his view this site simply would not work despite your professionalism and the great things that the festival has brought to this County and its participants. It is a wonderful festival, it does wonderful things for children, it does wonderful things for all involved, and this whole County. Cannot in good conscious say that out ways the safety issues that in my personal view are not able to be mitigated without causing further environmental issues, to cutting a road through that hill. Last thing that this Board wants to do in encourage a large scale road to cut through the bank because that will set persistence that if you have a good entrance you can have events.

At Supervisor Bass's request; Chair Weiss explained that VDOT viewed the wrong site. The person thought that they were being asked to view Watermelon Park not the new location. Generally, VDOTs rules to these type of private events is that as long as they do not create backup on the road, it is not a problem. VDOT relies on the Board of Supervisors to say that we think this is a good event and we will ask the applicant to keep the traffic off of the roads. It is a valid point that the Board has incorrect information in the packet, so we do not have a definitive answer from VDOT on that issue.

Trevor Creany explained that Shepherd's Ford Production sent the notice of the application to VDOT when the application was sent into County Administration. The departments then have 45-days to respond and if they do not respond it is deemed as an approval; when discussing road issues it would have been nice to have the answer from VDOT prior to the public hearing.

Chair Weiss stated that as the Board reviewed the application and concerns arose tried to convey that information to the respected department and to the applicants.

Supervisor Lawrence stated that in Trevor Creany's defense the first paragraph says the address to VDOT, but believe that as soon as they saw watermelon they skipped down to the rest of the letter and did not realize it was in a different spot. Trevor Creany expressed that that is unfortunate for Shepherd's Ford Productions.

Chair Weiss explained personally that he believe VDOT will not have an issue with the access because it is not on their right-of-way. Adding that personally do not feel that you have a good access.

Supervisor Catlett expressed that the Board is tasked tonight to look at the application for the special use permit at this location. We know that Shepherd's Ford Productions have done an amazing job at Watermelon Park for years, so for all of the people who wrote the letters of support it is not a surprise because everyone really enjoys the event. Tonight, the Board has to look at this application at this location and this site is not suitable of safe.

Supervisor Bass read the following personnel written statement:

"I am not an unbiased and disinterested member of the community when it comes to music. I come from a musical family – my father and brother performed classical guitar and lute pieces at The Barns in October. I have also performed in multiple genres across the County for years. I have a number of friends who play and perform regularly here in the County and regionally, including close friends who played annually at Watermelon Park Fest. My family, friends, and I have attended Watermelon Park and the River & Roots Festival regularly for a number of years. Music is near and dear to us.

Beyond that, Clarke County and its surrounding areas are blessed with a plethora of musical talent. I have always believed that music is a tremendous cultural boon for Clarke County. And the fine people behind Shepherds Ford are integral in developing and maintaining that culture. It's no coincidence that Trevor and his friends (who I've performed with) grew nearby Pasture Palooza from a casual field party into a well-respected festival that drew regional and even national performing acts.

In all my years attending events at Watermelon Park, I never witnessed anything other than family-friendly, environmentally-conscientious, peaceful patrons enjoying great music by the River. I have full faith in Shepherds Ford that wherever the location, they would do as good a job managing a festival as any outfit, anywhere. I really want these festivals to happen. My family and friends do too. I

have received a number of communications in support of Shepherds Ford and the Festivals.

At the same time, I believe my role as County Supervisor requires me to be objective in making decisions that impact County residents and land use. For the same reasons my colleagues have already stated, and some of those stated in the record, including compliance with our Zoning regulations, I have deep reservations about this particular location. While my own personal biases, being a Town resident, would steer the Festivals to the Fairgrounds, I will continue to support Shepherds Ford in its quest to resurrect the unique, important, and irreplaceable music festivals it, and Clarke County, are known for. But I cannot support this particular venue as it is currently proposed at this time.

So while Shepherds Ford will forever have my patronage and heartfelt vote of confidence, it pains me to say that unfortunately I cannot vote to approve the Special Event Permit as presented.”

Vice-Chair McKay expressed that he hopes that Shepherd’s Ford Productions can find a different location that is suitable. Very supportive, it has been going on for many years and is woven into generations of Clarke County; really hope that Shepherd’s Ford Productions can find a different, better location.

Supervisor Catlett moved to deny the Watermelon Pickers Fest, River & Roots Festival, single-day Special event permit. The motion carried by the following vote:

Matthew E. Bass	-	Aye
Terri T. Catlett	-	Aye
Doug M. Lawrence	-	Aye
Beverly B. McKay	-	Aye
David S. Weiss	-	Aye

Chair Weiss thanked the applicant for his honesty and integrity; for working with the County; sorry that it did not work out.

24) Adjournment

At 8:47 pm, Chairman Weiss adjourned the meeting.

Next Regular Meeting Date

The next regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors is set for Tuesday, January 19, 2021, at 1:00 p.m. in the Berryville Clarke County Government Center, Main Meeting Room, 101 Chalmers Court, Berryville, Virginia.

ATTEST: December 15, 2020

David S. Weiss, Chair

Chris Boies, County Administrator

Transcribed by Brianna R. Taylor, Deputy Clerk to the Board of Supervisors