

8/11/08 Open Letter to Supervisors, submitted to Virginia Gazette & jcegov.org

An open letter to the James City County Board of Supervisors

As you hold your Work Session on the Code of Ethics this Tuesday, 8/12/08, I hope you will consider the following.

- 1) It has been established that the Code of Ethics (COE) is non-binding.
- 2) The COE as written has allowed the Chair of the BOS to simply ignore COE violations alleged against members of the Board and others.
- 3) Continued and repeated violations of the COE have gone unaddressed.
- 4) This situation has led to heated commentary and libelous statement from behind the dias.

As it stands now, the COE is just a bunch of words with no actions to support them, no enforcement. This needs to change. Intervention is what the COE dictates when violations are alleged. There appears to have been no intervention. The citizens of James City County deserve local government with the integrity to live up to the COE and to enforce this policy when violations are clear.

Furthermore, we need to implement additional measures in the COE to increase the public trust of our local government. These include measures such as those implemented by Loudoun County Virginia, which restricts political contributions from developers and applicants to the BOS candidates, as well as full disclosure by Supervisors of the scheduled meetings they have with individuals and groups outside the public BOS scheduled meetings.

Mr. Kennedy has indicated to me that while on the Planning Commission (PC), he advanced such an agenda for discussion and found little support. I ask now that Mr. Kennedy is in the majority on the Board of Supervisors that he reintroduces the elements that have been implemented in Loudoun County.

Additionally, I encourage our elected officials to acknowledge that accepting significant financial contributions to their political campaigns after the last filing deadline prior to an election is unacceptable, and has led to distrust among the voters.

In the past, the James City County Republican Committee under the direction of Mr. Chris Henderson, has raised the lion's share of their funds (\$19,873 of \$22,791) after the last filing deadline, thus keeping from the voters the fact that this money was largely from developer and real estate interests.

I propose that any Supervisor running for reelection pledge to only accept contributions of \$100 or less after the final reporting deadline prior to an election to avoid such appearances of impropriety. This should be written into the COE and the COE should be binding.

Does this put the incumbent at a disadvantage and require that person to live up to a higher standard? Absolutely, that is just the purpose of the JCC Code of Ethics, to keep things unquestionably above board. Any challenger that does not abide by these same terms leaves themselves open to severe and justified criticisms as Mr. Henderson has experienced.

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