

## Shenandoah Shores

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# County approves Shenandoah Shores mandatory H2O

## Well owners assured of continued existing well use, discounted central hook ups

By Roger Bianchini  
Warren County Report

With the lone major bone of contention over a request by the Shenandoah Shores Cooperative Water Association to mandate central water hook ups cleared up, the Warren County Board of Supervisors approved that request by a 4-0 vote on Sept. 15. Board Chairman abstained from the vote and discussion after disclosing his well-drilling business interests.

During the public hearing, Gene Black, who has contracted and done water system work in the area for years, expressed the concern of existing residential well users that they would not be allowed to continue the use of their existing water systems and be mandated into a system they currently did not have a need for. "The way it is written no one knows their wells are exempt. Most think they will have to abandon their wells to hook up to the central water system," Black told

the board. "People aren't going to lose their wells, as Dan [Althouse] said," Black pointed out, adding that functioning well owners would also receive downward adjusted hook up fees into the central system since they would be utilizing less water because of the continued use of their wells for as long as they did not fail.

However, Black also cited confusion over the wording of an applicable section of the proposed code ordinance, Section 179-17, on how "failed wells" would be defined. County Attorney Blair Mitchell responded with a suggested change to the code wording, clarifying that established wells in the Shores could not only be used, but also "deepened, repaired or otherwise maintained until and unless they became chemically or bacteriologically contaminated as determined by the Virginia Health Department or by independent testing and analysis ..."

Dan Althouse, who has taken over operation of the Shenandoah Shores Sanitary District central water operation, and who runs other such systems in the county, told the supervisors, "I started this." Althouse reiterated a point made by others that it was difficult for the Shores water authority to get financial assistance grants because it was not a closed and mandatory system.

But he acknowledged, "I find it uncomfortable to require things of people in a free society – but this is an issue of public safety and health ... As long as existing wells are maintained properly, they should be okay." Althouse added that the builders he had spoken to were generally happy with the requested move by the Shores water authority.

With the stated guarantees in place, the request passed without opposition.

Rates set in the approval include connection fees of \$3,500 and a one-time membership fee payment of \$1,500. Residents with functioning wells will pay a half price connection fee of \$1,750 into the central system. Usage rates are \$87.50 to 15,000 gallons; \$120.35 to 21,000 gallons; and \$185.20 to 30,000 gallons.



**Dan Althouse is all about personal freedoms, but public health, safety and funding limitations require the Shenandoah Shores move to mandated central water, the central water management expert told county officials - they agreed.**

Those rates are comparable to, but slightly lower than the town's out-of-town central water rates of \$94.26; \$149.82; and \$233.16, respectively. In-town water rates are lower at \$47.13; \$74.91; and \$116.58, respectively.

### Farms property acquisition

And with not even a whisper of complaint, and no repeated accusations about the county's illegal use of Sanitary District funds, the board unanimously approved a \$12,000 purchase, plus costs, utilizing Shenandoah Farms Sanitary District funds to purchase the Schulze property. Martin and Donna Schultze had initially sought a price of \$17,500 for the approximately one-acre lot that would have required the significant, .212 acre, dedication for planned Sanitary District roadwork.

The purchase will facilitate the inclusion of a 33-space parking lot at the site of road improvements at one of the entrances to the Farms off High Top Road. Previous issues about the use of Sanitary District funds, as well as the fact a portion of the acquisition included land outside the Sanitary District, were silenced by codes produced by the county attorney authorizing both the use of those funds, and the acquisition of property outside the dis-

trict that directly impacted the district. In fact, one past critic of the proposed acquisition who addressed the board earlier in the meeting about general Sanitary District issues, and another interested observer and critic of the county's role in the district in attendance, a Ms. Chappelwhite (sp?) and Mr. Pierceall, respectively, both left the meeting prior to the Sanitary District meeting at which the vote to acquire the land was taken.

The board heard no public comment one way or the other prior to its unanimous vote of approval. However, during earlier discussion of some Farms Sanitary District issues, the potential of replacing the current voluntary board of directors with a professional management person was raised. It was noted that the sprawling neighborhood and now Sanitary District has gone from an initial \$30,000 budget to over \$800,000, and should approach a million dollar annual budget within the next few years. Current Farms Board Chairman Ralph Rinaldi recently told this reporter that the management of the Farms and the Sanitary District has gotten to the point and size that the county and area residents may have to contemplate such a move to paid, professional management in the near future.

### Who says homes aren't selling?

#### Warren County Real Estate Data for June 2009

- 44 home sales were recorded. 45 properties sales were pending. 412 homes are currently on the market (these numbers are falling...GREAT news)
- Sales are up and the volume of homes for sale is falling. Great news for Warren County.
- Buyers take note: you only have until Nov 31 to take advantage of your \$8000 tax credit. Call us to see if you qualify.
- Regardless of what the media is telling you: there are still 0 down payment loans available. Cash in on the current 5% interest rates.



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