

GSA Public Project Overview Meeting

Queen Anne's County High School, Centreville, MD

DATE: January 7, 2010 6:00-8:00pm

Karasch & Associates

Captioned by: Rob H.

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Started at 6:05pm

U.S. GSA Public Scoping Meeting.

January 7, 2010.

Queen Anne's County High School.

We're going to get ready to get started before we get started, can you please turn off your cell phone if you have a cell phone, please

Hi everyone, welcome to the public scoping meeting for NEPA and NHPA. Thanks for coming. Many of you know my name Gina Gilliam the public affairs officer for the.... I hope you had a chance to sign in and if you haven't please do so before leaving. We've begun creating an email distribution list so we're going to keep everybody informed.

Also we have a stenographer here who is documenting tonight's meeting. And also if you have a question or comment you want to submit so that it's on the record you can go over here and that will be inputted. Queen Anne's County has someone here videotaping the meeting. Which will be shown on the county public access channel. Also representatives from the media are covering the meeting.

We also hope of course that you received a comment sheet when you signed in. Additional comment sheets are over there right back in that area is, and that's also where the comment box is.

Please take a few minutes to write down your questions or comments. We also have some refreshments for you over here--some water and cookies. So please take advantage of that. The purpose of tonight's meeting is to provide information about the Department of State's foreign affairs security training center project as well as give you an opportunity to participate in both the NEPA and NHPA process.

The focus of this scoping meeting tonight is on the proposed development of the training center. There will be a short presentation followed by an opportunity for you to go around and observe the storyboards that are related to the NEPA and NHPA process.

We have several subject matter experts who will be stationed around the room near the boards that will be able to share project information with you. So let's get started. And we'll start with the presentation portion of this meeting.

I'd like to first start by introduce our first speaker who is Katrina Scarpato. She is GSA's mid Atlantic regional environmental quality adviser.

Thank you Gina. Good evening my name that Katrina Scarpato. I'm the regional environmental quality adviser for the mid Atlantic region. I'm here tonight to represent GSA as a lead agency for the national environmental policy as well as national historical preservation Act for the studies proposed for this project.

Tonight's meeting is an important step for NEPA and section 106. Public involvement is a key component of the NEPA and section 106 process. And we encourage your participation to identify and comment on the potential impacts to the natural cultural and social resources from the proposed development of the Hunt Ray and Chismer farms. As Gina previously mentioned the focus is on the development and use of the farms. And design alternatives that may come out of that process.

I'd like to add that we did hear your concerns on Tuesday evening and we've been receiving your comments related to the resources potentially affected by the proposed project.

After the presentation tonight subject matter experts such as acoustic specialists, transportation engineers and historians will be available for you to speak with to gain a better understanding of the NEPA process. For those who have submitted comments Tuesday evening you do not need to resubmit those comments. They will be used as part of the environmental assessment process and

as well as any comments tonight. Anything submitted on Tuesday as well as tonight will be reviewed as part of the environmental assessment.

And at this time I'd like to introduce Christopher Peoples of KCCT LEED. KCCT and the consultants will be preparing on behalf of the GSA and department of the state.

Thank you Katrina. Good evening everyone. For those who were not here on Tuesday my name is Christopher Peoples.

Can't hear you.

Sorry. My name is Christopher Peoples. And I'm with KCCT architects and I am the lead for the AE team on the FASTC project. Tonight here as a first step in the NEPA process. As Katrina stated this is your opportunity to comment on issues as they relate to the environmental and historical aspects of the project. We welcome your comments tonight.

I would now like to introduce my environmental engineering consultant Todd Hull who is with AECOM. Todd will provide more detail on the NEPA and NHPA process and how you may participate.

Thank you Chris, and welcome everyone tonight to our public scoping meeting. My name is Todd as Chris indicated. I work for a company AECOM incorporated out of Alexandria, Virginia. We're helping and assisting the federal agencies and KCCT to develop the environmental documentation for the project. I'd like to walk you through the NEPA process tonight and a little about this section 106 with the associate of mine. But first I want to discuss a few things about the proposed project and the proposed action.

There are four primary goals we're looking at to achieve the proposed action: To consolidate many of the training functions currently carried out at the contracted

facilities nationwide, improve training efficiency, to provide priority access for the bureau of the diplomatic security and improve overall operating efficiency.

In short the demand for training is increasing and the use of scattered and consolidated training facilities is detrimental to the training mission of the diplomatic security.

Based on our programming efforts to date there are several functions that have been identified for the training center. And those four functions are categorized into two main areas: Hard skills and soft skills. And the slide will demonstrate a few of the hard skills and the soft skills.

The proposed action also referred to as the "project program." You may here hare projects program or proposed action. Includes five elements. As I mentioned the soft skills training which is generally classroom and indoor type activities. Hard skills training with tactical skills such as driving tracks and firing ranges. Life support that is lodging, food, service, fire EMS and those sorts of things. And infrastructure to provide utilities through and within the site. Additionally there are a few operational functions that will be housed at the training center.

On November 30th, 2009, the Hunt Ray Crismer farm complex was identified as the preferred site for the training center. The site is approximately 2,050 acres in size with flat to gently rolling terrain. The site will contain considerable amount of open space.

Here is a general aerial view of the Hunt Ray Crismer complex and like a vicinity map, aerial vicinity map below that. By the way all these slides you will see later on are contained in the boards. So if you can't see that slide or any other very closely, they are throughout the cafeteria here.

I'd like to focus a little on the NEPA process the National Environmental Act policy process. This process is your chance to provide us with your input about the potential impacts that may result from our proposal. The flow chart demonstrates we're just at the first step in the NEPA process. It's called scoping. You might recall this is a public scoping meeting.

This includes gathering your input today with a comment forms or verbally through a tribe transcriber and stenographer which we have located in the cafeteria. Mostly we need written comments so we can analyze them in developing the environmental documentation.

There is, through this process another chance for public comment after we develop the draft environmental assessment. That'll be issued probably some time late this winter or early spring and there will be a 30 day comment period on the draft environmental assessment.

There are five main groups that we analyze during the environmental assessment process. Those are land use and socioeconomics, cultural resources, which includes buildings and landscapes and archaeology; utilities and infrastructure; transportation systems; and physical and biological resources. You can see a number of sub categories on there. Those are also on the board. So you can focus in on one of the maybe more specific issues.

Now I'd like to turn part of presentation over to AECOM's cultural resource specialist. Stephanie.

Sorry. Concurrently with NEPA we are working to comply with the section 106 of the national historic preservation Act. And section 106 requires federal agencies to evaluate the effects of federal actions on historic resources. Section 106 -- the section 106 consultation is being undertaken together with the Maryland State

Historic Preservation Officer. The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, consulting parties and the public.

And if you look at the slide on the right-hand side, that runs through the steps in the 106 process. It includes initiation, which is where we are now at the very beginning, the identification of historic properties and assessment of adverse effects, a resolution of adverse effects and then development of a programmatic agreement or a memorandum of agreement.

As part of the 106 process, an area of potential effects where APE is defined. The area potential effects is the area within an undertaking apply directly or indirectly cause changes in the character or use of historic properties. A draft APE shown in blue on the map has been developed in consultation with the Maryland State Historic Preservation Office.

The APE includes the site itself that may be directly affected as well as those areas that may be subject to indirect visual effects. Note that the draft APE shown here only applies to historic resources. Within the environmental assessment, study areas will be defined for each resource discipline, such as noise, land use, water resources.

At this point we don't know whether there are historic properties. But we are making every effort to follow the Section 106 process and to identify historic properties. If you would like more information on the section 106 process we have a representative from the advisory council here tonight Kirsten Coolis. And she is going to be located over -- she is located over at the tall banner right back there. (indicating). So thank you.

Thank you Stephanie. For more information on this project, please visit the website email address or phone number listed on the slide above. And it's also will

be on one of the last boards as you exit tonight. We'll have all the contact information.

We welcome your comments and writing through email or forms, the comment forms provided tonight. Which are also located on the tables. We also have a stenographer as I mentioned to describe any verbal comments you may have tonight.

It's important to note that NEPA related comments are due by January 15, 2010 so please get your comments in either tonight or as soon as possible. We value your comments and they really help us direct how the environmental assessment is put together. So feel free to visit the boards. All the slides are represented on the boards, plus different resource stations throughout the cafeteria.

Thank you very much for coming tonight. We value your input. Please give us written comments or through the email site.

Again, thank you very much, everyone, and feel free to roam around the room, look at each station. Get some information and write your comments. Thank you very much for coming.

Thanks. Can I have some of the team be prepared to move some of the chairs so we have more space? thank you.

Do we have an opportunity to speak tonight?

Hey, do we have an opportunity to speak?

For those who are interested the stenographer is right on the end of the table right there. We're not having open Q and A tonight. The intent of tonight's meeting is to solicit comments regarding the NEPA process. And we need those comments in writing.

Tonight's meeting is for written comments and providing information at the stations. So please visit those. At in this time people who are stationed around the board, please be prepared to talk to everyone.

COMMENTS:

SPEAKER FROM THE FLOOR: My name is Jim Campbell. And I am a member of the Board of Directors of the Queen Anne's Conservation Association. I would like to comment on two aspects . . .

THEN THERE WAS A BREAK DURING WHICH THE DoS & GSA PERSONELL & THE CONSULTANTS LEFT THE PODIUM LEAVING THE LIVE MIC BEHIND.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC SPONTANEOUSLY CAME FORWARD AND ADDRESSED THE AUDIENCE. THE FIRST FEW OF THESE COMMENTS WERE NOT RECORDED BY THE STENOGRAPHER. THEN, THE STENOGRAPHER RESEMED TAKING DOWN THE FULL REMARKS OF THE CITIZENS AS THEY CAME FORWARD ON AN AD-HOC BASIS TO MAKE COMMENT. THIS "PASSING OF THE MIC" CONTINUED WITHOUT A MODERATOR UNTIL THE END OF THE MEETING.

[Unidentified Speaker, not Jim Campbell] They said we would have a chance to speak (women on the mic) the first step in this process was to hear what our concerns were. And now they're forbidding this. They don't want to hear -- (audience members talking).

-- --

Because I don't live on Kent Island I guess I don't know. But the fact that the Chamber of Commerce is going to support this and willing to get rid of all of us who support local businesses guess what I'm going to find out which businesses are

going supporting and I'm going to start a grassroots effort right now to boycott those businesses and picket in front of those businesses.

And I have nothing to lose focus. I have nothing to lose. My whole life is going down the drain right now and I'm going to stand take a stand and I hope everybody will support me on that.

(Applause).

I've done a lot today because I didn't know exactly what to do. I expected tonight we were going to be able to ask questions and everything I really did because that's what they told us on Tuesday.

I thought to myself okay how can we get to be heard. Now the constitution is for the people, right? Aren't we the people? Why is the senator the governor, the elected officials not even responding to us?

I have sent an email and Facebook and everything else saying the whole situation to every person I know to send to every person they know to send to every person they know if we get enough interest in the country to get on the big news like CNN and CNBC, the government will have to listen to us. Because it's we the people, for the people. And this is not, not for the people.

No, absolutely. I've raised my kids here.

(Applause).

I've built a business here and it's not right for the government to come in and take it. And I get so upset when I hear people say it's the government, there's nothing you can do. That's baloney. We built the government. We can stop this if we can be together as a team altogether. Who's with me?

(Applause).

Hellos. My name is Gene Higgins. I've lived here for 20 years. I chose to live here. And it's tearing me up to see my friends and my neighbors screaming at each other, especially when the tenor just goes over the roof and obscenities are used. Especially when their young children are involved. I taught school for 16 years. I lived in up state New York for 17 years. Seneca Army depot was closed in 2002. It is 10,000 acres. They have an airstrip. They have huts that could be blown up for practice. The people up there don't have jobs just like there are some people here who don't have jobs. Seneca Falls would be thrilled to have this facility there. If it comes here, you see the result. People are screaming at each other.

And the hunters, what is going to happen to their industry when the senators and congressman come over here to hunt geese there aren't going to be any geese. We put in a small alarm system in my home. And my husband had to test it. The next morning after several beep beeps, the Martins were gone and the Baltimore Orioles were gone.

What's going to happen to our hunting industry, what is going to happen to the tourist industry? So both sides can scream at me. Because, I'm here to try to figure out a solution to this problem.

These people need to be trained. There is terrorism in the world. And I wouldn't appreciate it if you would stop talking. My teacher is in force now. You with the baseball hat... thank you sir.

It took a lot of courage for me to come up here and talk. This is a good solution to the problem. I think that they're trying to do it in a hurry. They want our responses by the 15th. Baa-lowny !

Anything good takes a long time to plan to figure out. And if we really care about American jobs the people in Seneca Falls are Americans, the people in Oklahoma are Americans. The people in Texas are Americans. They have closed

military bases. They they're large. They have airstrips. They have used buildings. They could blow those up and build their new classrooms. Okay? They want to make a lot of noise.

Seneca Falls was where all the -- went after World War II. That's where they blew them up. They already have the baffles in place. But heaven forbid the federal government should do anything that's cost effective and makes sense.

(Applause).

Okay? Please stop screaming at each other. Go to the Seneca Falls Army depot website. Look it up. It's a good location. If you don't like that 10,000 acres, that we as tax payers have already paid for find another closed military base and check it out.

Okay? There are a lot of communities who could use the business and use the construction workers and you say oh, it's not within this little circle of Washington DC. Get an airplane. It'll take an hour to get to Seneca Falls. If you've ever driven over the bay bridge you know there are lots of days it takes more than an hour to cross the bay bridge. I'm not buying this it has to be close to Washington DC baloney! These people are being trained to fan out all across the world. What's the difference whether it's an hour air flight or a car ride?

Thank you.

(Applause).

I'd like to take a moment to express my concerns, thoughts and emotions about this --

Speak up.

I would like to take a moment to express my concerns thoughts emotions about this proposed project. The other night I had an outburst which although many of you thought it was inappropriate, I'm not going to apologize. I would much rather my children and fellow neighbors hear me shout an obscenity than hear bomb blast as they are playing outside or sleeping.

(Applause).

These people have shown no respect to us. We have been misinformed, told what we want to hear. We've asked questions that weren't answered. And we have been kept in the dark about this project. This is our homes, our lives, our investments and our futures. They're all at stake here. And I absolutely refuse to sit quietly and watch my way of life and my commun[ity] be destroyed.

It completely blows my mind that our elected officials would allow and support something like this in the middle of a huge farming community. Next to the only state park in the county, on a river that flows into the bay. And at an area where peoples homes border the property of this facility. We're not talking about a Wal-Mart or a Four Seasons size project. This is over 2,000 acres of land that will be used as a battleground and a virtual war zone. This is not what I envisioned when I moved here.

I will say that I am very much in favor of trading our military to handle terrorist encounters. But there are already 19 facilities that are currently being used for this type of training. Why do we need another? The existing facilities have been substantial up until now for this training. No clear definite answer has been given as to why we need another facility except that it would be easier to partially consolidate the training into one facility.

So if you're partially consolidating, then you're obviously going to still use some of the existing facilities for some of the training. Why not spend some of the proposed

\$500 million to expand and upgrade the existing facilities? Why come here and disrupt the peaceful rural, family oriented community with gunfire and explosions?

You can build all the walls and fences you want around this facility. There is no possible way to eliminate sounds from gunfire, bombs, helicopters and traffic. We don't want you here as our neighbor.

(Applause).

We don't want you here at all.

Hi my name is Rebecca Tailer. I wanted to read today's paper do citizens prefer higher taxes or deeper debt? The Queen Anne's County commissioners want to generate funds to preserve farmland from development. They want to gauge public support for either increasing taxes or increasing county debt.

Isn't that a contradiction?

(Applause).

Hi my name is Jim Lechner. I oppose this as does my family. My son Danny my nine-year-old has a question that I don't think there is anybody left to answer but we're going to go for it.

Hi I just wanted to know -- I'm an ornithologist and I just want to know what's going to happen to all the birds and the animals.

(Applause).

It's just like the other night. It won't get answered. It's don't matter if they're here or not.

Yeah I'm a little surprised. I was here Tuesday night. I thought we were going to have a chance to speak in front of the forum. But that's okay. But one thing I was calculating a few things. They're talking about 530 jobs that are currently in

these 19 areas. And there's going to be 400 new jobs created. That's 930, if I'm figuring right. And they said there have been 10,000 students a year going through this facility. That comes out to about 800 a month. So that's about 1700 people it. Sounds like there's going to be close to a thousand vehicles traveling around Ruthsburg a day. I don't know how accurate that is but it's close.

If the numbers are accurate what you read. A thousand vehicles a day traveling around Ruthsburg Road. That's Crouse Mill. All over the place-- Rt. 384, 481. That's a lot of vehicles. I guess they're going have to widen the roads. Widen 304. Crass Mill Road that goes to Ridley. That's going to be packed. That's incredible.... to think a thousand cars a day more. The intersection was blocked Tuesday night. I come from Ruthsburg. I was a little late.

Everybody knows about the accident? A man perished at an intersection. Two cars rolled over. We're going to add a thousand cars to this? Come on, man. Get real.

But nobody's -- no government people are here to answer this question. Where are the government people? I asked a question Tuesday, never got a answer. What's going on? Why do we got to consolidate nineteen places to one?

(Applause).

I have thirty years with the department of defense, and I know how things work. But... you know. And well I -- why can't you consolidate 19 to three or four and accomplish the same result. As far as consolidating and saving some money?

Lastly the jobs, everybody's excited. You got people from Kent County, Kent Island. They're excited about all the jobs being created, right? Well, where I work the last contract that went out was for a large air-conditioning refrigeration job. This is a fact. Every worker that came to do that job was [from] south of Norfolk. They were 200 miles away.

You know the gentlemen said this is going on the government website— World Wide Web. These jobs are going to be on the website. But my place of occupation, every worker that came to do the air conditioner refrigeration came from south of Portsmouth.

They came and stayed in a hotel Monday Tuesday Wednesday night. Stayed in a hotel. Worked 12 hours a day. Went home Thursday came back Monday morning. No local person worked in that high paying job. It sounds good don't it? All these jobs -- wake up!

(Applause).

They're on the Internet. Worldwide web. People come from all over the to do this work. There will be some local jobs. Some local people get some jobs. This is big money, man. A – million-dollar project. Good luck. Some will and I hope they do. But the reality is the majority of the jobs are on the website and they're going [to] come from out of town. Thank you.

(Applause).

I am very pleased to see all you here tonight.

Louder.

This is really short and all of you need to hear it. We were told that we were put in this uncomfortable room because there was play practice in the auditorium. I just went in the auditorium. There is no play practice. Now, if they will misrepresent such a small thing, what do you think they're going to do about the big things?

(Applause).

Please be realistic. If this is such a godsend, why are they lying to us? Like I said, I'm really thrilled to see...

Speak up.

Louder.

All right. [This is the] first time I've been accused of being too quiet. My name is Sveinn Storm. A friend of mine Bud Roe is here tonight. And he and I became aware of this from a newspaper article and from some word on the street.

We became very concerned because primarily it was done behind the citizens backs. And we feel that the business of the people is to be conducted in front of the people.

Here here!

(Applause).

For those of you that don't know Mr. Rowe and I about a little over 5 years ago went to jail for that very reason. There was an illegal open meeting --or closed session that was taking place and we knew that they were breaking the law. So we went in there and sat in on that meeting. And refused to leave. I took the Baltimore Sun and the Washington Post and NBC there and they watched us and photographed us two middle age fathers getting carted away to jail.

Five minutes later they opened that meeting at the advice of the attorney general. Five and a half hours later Mr. Rowe and I were unchained and let go.

(Applause).

We didn't do that because we're brave. We didn't do that because we're extraordinary. We did it because we have children and we believe many what my relatives and uncles and many of you have fought for the democracy. The fact of the matter is for those of there the other night you know your questions weren't really answered.

Well we don't plan on doing this. Or at this time we aren't planning on... All of those things people should be aware of. It's very dangerous when you let the camels nose get under the tent. And I think that most of us looking at the condition of our country now have certain reservations about how well government represents us and how honest they are.

(Applause).

Here's what it's all about. What it's all about is that we live here. And for those that believe that it is going to bring a great number of jobs, the gentlemen that was talking earlier, that every document -- the most generous document that the State Department and GSA has put out has said that we will be possibly have 500 jobs. Out of those about 250 to 300 of those jobs are going to be people that are imported in. It's a very specialized sort of training. And they do admit that we will get what are called maintenance jobs. That's fancy for janitorial and cafeteria jobs.

While I hardly see that that makes sense to sacrifice what we have here on the eastern shore and our way of life for those few jobs.

(Applause).

Parents who are devout Christians raised me. And I was taught from early childhood that you're to put yourself in somebody else's shoes, that you are your brother's keeper. That if you know that something's wrong and you do nothing you're just as guilty.

For those of you that are here tonight I want you to put yourself in the place of those families that live near this site. And ask yourself: Is this what I would want to have happen to my family?

So this fight needs to continue. Democracy needs to be furthered. And for those of us here tonight I hope you'll stay involved in the fight. I thank you for everything that you've done.

(Applause).

My name [is] Neil Jackson. I chose to live here in Queen Anne's County. And I think that what I see here tonight has been really an abomination of the process. I lived in Washington for a long time. I saw the government and I I'm very familiar with the National Environmental Policy Act.

I once was a lawyer. I'm recovering from that now . . . But I can say this. The National Environmental Policy Act was intended to be a genuine exchange between your government and you about what is good for the environment, including your environment. What I see tonight with this odd strange procedure that has been adopted is not what I think the National Environmental Policy Act requires.

In fact taking from the words of one of these fine handouts that we got over here, the question is "what is a consultation?" Well they think [that] is what we're [doing] here. To use the words from our colleagues from the government: "the consultation is the process of seeking, discussing and considering the views of other participants." And where feasible seeking agreement with them regarding matters arising in the process" those are their words— focus folks that comes directly out of law.

What I see here tonight is a one-way street. Sure submit your comment, develop them drop them in the box. We may or may not consider them. But the reality is that's illegal. And for those of you that are still here from the government— if anybody is here to listen I strongly urge you to step up to bat and listen to people. And don't cutoff the debate. Thank you.

(Applause).

The government says we're by the people of the people for the people. They did no tests before they picked this site. They did nothing to actually prove that this site was the best site. The only thing that qualifies this is 2,000 acres of land is the fact that it's a rural area. That's the only thing that they did not prove is that this would be a good site.

If there are any government officials here now I would like to ask you personally if you would come up and tell me why you're picking this site. Tell me why you haven't done any tests yet. That's all I would like to know.

(Applause).

Hi. Y'all know me-- Sherry Adams. And I know I spoke earlier and I got upset and I apologize for that. But this is upsetting. And I do want you to know something. How many here have a structure or building or house or whatever that's 50 years or older. Raise your hand?

(Hands).

If you know of anybody who has [a home 50] years or older. Because when I went over and spoke to Kristin Coolis over at the historic preservation [station] I found out that's what makes it historical-- if it's 50yr's or older. Ours is a hundred. But we have got to put in our comments--I think it's by January 15th. So we have to make them know that we've got that. Our neighbor who couldn't be here today, his house used to be a doctors office. And it was even a gated office.

There's all guidance of this things that have to be historical. I say we beat them at their own game. Learn the rules and regulations and prove to them that this isn't the place. This isn't the right place.

Good evening, I'm Bud Rowe. I basically want to touch on a few points. Basically I want to read you this letter that our county commissioners sent [to] the Honorable [Delegate] Hoyer and other{s} on December 29th. It basically says read foreign affairs security training center.

[On] December 22nd four of the five commissioners voted unanimously to no longer support the training center proposed for the Hunt Ray farm. It says [they] will withdraw the[ir] support effective immediately as a result of 2 significant factors. The December 3rd request for proposals and solicitations for aggressive training techniques were never contemplated by this Board when [it] first offered its support.

We have reviewed your attached RFP, and our continued but unsuccessful requests other the last several months for the request of a public meeting about this proposed project facility. Just this week we were notified, after two unsuccessful months, that we have these two meetings January 5th and 7th. We are pleased. Listen to this folks! The meetings have finally been scheduled but a lack of transparency has compounded the situation. These factors, in addition to the quality of life issues raised by our citizens and shared by our commissioners, have resulted in our change of position regarding this facility. We look forward to these meetings.

Sincerely,

The County Commissioners.

Well we look forward to talking to them. But I really think we had a stacked deck. The transparency as I said was my main issue when I first poked my nose into this. I basically feel that our county commissioners were left out loop of the loop.

This was basically championed at the state level. And our state politicians basically talked about it and considered it and pretty much wanted [it] here. Jobs Jobs Jobs.

Well basically our philosophy here, we're going through our comprehensive plan. And we ha[d] a vis[ioning] process and we wanted to keep most of Queen Anne's County rural. Well, if this goes through I really feel that in ten years the north county will be very suburbanized.

Our visioning statement for our comprehensive plan which we're formulating this year [is a] vision [for our County that is a] predominantly rural area with small towns, connected by creeks, county roads and through fields and forests-- a great place to live; a county that encourages agriculture, seafood maritime industries, tourism and outdoor sports, small businesses and high-tech enterprise-- a great place to work; A county [that is] a faithful steward of its cultural heritage-- a good neighbor for the bay and other eastern shore counties; And finally a County in which development by some does not impair the quality of life enjoyed by all-- A community that protects the expectation and is opportunities of all citizens.

Now these aren't my words. This, I can read. I comprehend this stuff. Our commissioners, I'm not going bad-mouth them. They have gone 180 degrees. They have seen what this project is like. And they're not -- they don't -- they're not for it. County staff has been very forthcoming with me on how this came about. And it just kind of took off on a roller coaster.

I think [its] abominable that we only have one-week to have our written comments on the environmental impacts. I think one-week stinks.

Basically I haven't given my opinion on this. I've just read you information that I have. I'll just make one more point to you before I go. We don't have the Infrastructure; it is a terrible waste of farmland. They call small grain they call crops biological resources. That is-- corn, soybeans, and wheat.

I live on a farm. I make my living now through agriculture. "Biological resources." What a buzzword. Just like this "scoping meeting."

[I will] leave you with one small point. The U.S. Census Bureau calls a small town 20,000 people. That's what the census bureau calls a small town. We are a very unique town here in Centreville. What do we [have---] 3,500 people?

They're proposing to put 2,500 people [at the facility] within five years. Our school system-- our taxes will go up-- our schools will be over crowded-- more people are going to die on the highways. After--- million dollars they're going put in[to] this project for phase one. I feel just like that lady said--maybe they should look at these closed bases. I'm not going to rant and rave but they've got a \$151 million to start this facility. And it's going come out of our pockets.

Thank you for your time.

My name's George McGarretty. I moved here two years ago from Indianapolis. And one of the things that we [have] got to think about-- if Pandora's box is opened with this thing. Not only is this a big monster now, but also now they'll want to put in more hotel[s], gas stations more this and that and where are you going put all the poop? [Y]ou know we're paying for infrastructure now.

Sorry. I got hearing aids so it sounds good to me. You know, it gets back to once Pandora's box is opened, then they will just continue to ram more stuff in. And look at Kent Island-- Route 50 coming out whether it looks like that, what it'll be from here up to Dover and just borders on the edge of the road with crappy old outlet malls and stuff like that.

That's not what we signed up for. That's not what we live here for thank you.

Good evening everybody. See if I can blow out that microphone a little bit. My name is Andrew Langer. [A] Centreville resident here. And I apparently missed the fireworks earlier and I'm sorry about that. It's one of these things where I was rather astounded, as I'm sure all of you were, that this is the format they had chosen

for this evening. Who else besides me thinks that this is a hearing? And I know that the GSA--this isn't what this is intended to be. And I agree. But this process, this particular sort of an event-- who agrees with me that this should have happened a month and a half ago?

(Applause).

This outpouring of concern about this project, and as I look around I see friends and neighbors and people I've gotten to know. People I consider family in the audience. Never have I seen a community come out so unified as you have tonight. And I'm just astounded by that and so pleased. Give yourselves a round of applause. I thank you. [I] really need to do that.

(Applause).

The fact is I think we can all agree, right? We are not a[gainst] the State Department doing training. Right?

Correct!

We want our me[n] and women in uniform and those protecting our men and women serving abroad to have the best training possible, right?

(Applause).

We just want to make sure that our rights are protected here at home. We want to make sure our friend's and neighbor's rights are protected. We all love our government. We all fear our government. Because we all have stories, don't we, of areas in which the government may have stepped out and abused their discretion . . . gone over their bounds.

Yes.

And fundamentally, as someone who's been a property rights activist. . . see this is odd for me. It's odd for me to stand up with folks who have been consistently against development here in the county. I'm not consistently against development in the county. We want jobs and real economic growth here in the county.

But we don't need it at the hands of the government.

(Applause).

Right. So for me to stand here is a strange thing with some of my brethren on the other side. But the fact is, as a property rights activist, someone who [ha]s labored on that issue for a long time, I know that in the end it's the federal governments that [is] one of the greatest abusers of property rights in America.

(Applause).

And my fear is not just what may happen at the end of this process now. Because we all know, right, we all know deep down in our hearts that if the Feds want to do this . . .this is what we're all fearing. I can see it out there. We all know that if the Feds want to do th[is] . . . the[y are] beginning to do this right [now].

We just want to make sure that our rights are protected. Because we know if it does happen, and there are colleagues of mine who say they [know] that it will. We want to make sure it doesn't get expanded.

Here are my concerns. I want to make sure that any properties around this property get negotiated with in good faith. I want to make sure that the county is taken care of. Because what happens {does matter}. One of the things that I've been railing about for years is the amount of private land that's being turned over to government to run. Not only is it a drain on all of our resources, it isn't very well managed and takes it off the tax roles for us. We lose that.

What happens when this land goes off the tax rolls? Is the government going pay the county money? And if so, on what basis? Taxes for farmland or based on building an entire new city in Ruthsburg which is essentially wh[at] we're talking about, right? I don't know about you but when talking about urban training centers and three separate driving tracks. The former chief will tell us that is a city. That's bigger than Centreville, I think.

Right chief?

So idea is we have to make sure that our rights are protected. To my friends from GSA—that's why we're here. From Kent County that's why we're here. That's what we're concerned about. We want to make sure our rights are protected and our money is spent wisely and we want to make sure that our quality of life is going to exist because that's why we're all out here in Queen Anne's County.

So I want you to have a take away. I don't think anybody has given you [a] take away tonight. If you haven't met the people around you, if you don't know anybody in this audience, shake hands with them. Introduce yourself to them. Exchange email addresses and phone numbers.

There is a guy standing in the back— he's talking and not even listening to me. Dan Worth, I'm talking about you. Dan is putting together an email distribution list for the facts about this. And Dan's not a crazy guy. Dan is the kind of guy -- I know he looks crazy doesn't he. I know you're all thinking that right in the front row but Dan is an academic guy and looks at the facts. He's one of the best fact people I know in the [county] and he's putting together a good fact list. [A c]learinghouse of information. And we need to get organized. Give him your email addresses.

It's a table outside.

If you haven't signed up do so. But that's how we get things done. That's how you band together. All of this talk is worth nothing if there is no movement involved towards a goal.

So thank you very much. Have a good night. God bless.

Thank you. My name [is] Jim Campbell. I'm a member of the Board of Directors of Queen Anne's Conservation Association. And like Neil Jackson, I'm a recovering lawyer.

I wanted to expand a little bit on a couple of things that Neil said. And I'm pleased to note that the stenographer has been continuing to take down the comments that have been made at this meeting.

(Applause).

Even though the GSA officials seem not to have that in mind. We are fortunately continuing to have a record of this meeting.

The concern that Neil Jackson expressed about the process that has been started tonight, but not really started, is very well placed. I would observe first of all that when the GSA folks talk about an environmental assessment, they are talking about the short form of considering environmental consequences. If you thought [That there] were really going to be significant consequences from this project and you ought to think that, and then you would go to an environmental impact statement, not to an environmental assessment.

What one is concerned about is that this short form environmental assessment project with this ridiculously short deadline for comments will result in a so-called FOONSI, a "finding of no significant impacts." This process has not gotten off to a good start.

Let me just say formally for the record Queen Anne's Conservation Association believes there is no possibility that there will be a finding of no significant environmental impacts from this project and that an environmental impact statement, a full environmental impact statement is legally required.

Secondly, we take very strong objection to the extremely short comment period ending January 15th. It appears that this comment period was announced only within the last few days. And it is an unreasonable period of time if one is actually seeking to understand the environmental impacts and the existence of available alternatives. NEPA, National Environmental Policy Act, contemplates that serious scientific analysis will be done of effects.

How can organizations like ours, interested citizens and others assemble scientific information when people are in many cases barely back from the Christmas holidays? This is simply a way of giving lip service to a process and not taking it seriously.

(Applause).

So... Queen Anne's Conservation Association formally requests that the deadline for comments be extended at least until February 15th to allow the NEPA process to work the way it ought to work.

(Applause).

Finally, to go back to what Neil said and what I think was upsetting him, as it upsets me, is that the National Environmental Policy Act is built on the notion that when government makes decisions, it takes a hard look at the impacts of those decisions and it seriously considers alternatives which will have less impacts.

What we are seeing increasing evidence of here is that this is not a serious look at impacts. and it is not a serious consideration of alternatives. In the case law

this is known as "predetermination." It is a violation of the National Environmental Policy Act to reach your final decision before you have considered the alternatives and the impacts. And yet that's the road that we're on now.

(Applause).

On behalf of Queen Anne's Conservation I would like to formally register our concern over predetermination, which is shown not only by the kind of meetings we've had for the last couple of days, but increasing evidence of this [project is] being slated for this county, for reasons that do not take into account and do not intend to take into account the impacts here and the alternatives that are available.

We reserve our rights to challenge that at the appropriate time. Thank you.
Thank you.

(Applause).

Good evening. My name is Shawn Maglee. It's kind of tough following a lawyer. Well I'm just a fireman. My thoughts aren't as, you know, profound as his. But [] years [ago] I move[d] from Prince George's County to Queen Anne's County because it was quiet nice p[lace] and fel[t like] a place I could raise my family. So far I love living in this county. People are like--- why don't you move back across the bridge? Because I'm not stupid. I don't want to. Yes I work on the other side of the bridge. But I don't want to move back. My son's in scouts on this side. My son does all kinds of stuff in Queen Anne's County. My wife and I go to church in Queen Anne's County. I frequent Queen Anne's County businesses but I got a feel[ing] I'm going to get a list of some I'm going stop frequenting here very shortly.

(Applause).

I don't live in Centreville or Ruthsburg so it's not effecting my backyard but I have friends [and it is] effecting their backyard and whoever thinks the government

coming in and building a base is going to bring jobs to this area. I work on a base on the other side of the bridge we have large construction projects.

I was talking to some of the welders doing an inspection over there. And oh, yeah I'm from Pennsylvania. My whole crew is from Pennsylvania. That's great. This is not going to bring jobs here. That's how government contracting works. [I] caught up with an old friend . . . he's a welder. Paul do you think they'll give you job here. [A] local person, [is] not going to get a job welding [here]? Why? Because, he's not going to be able to afford the contract.

I don't want this -- I don't want this in Queen Anne's County. You guys don't want this in Queen Anne's County. In '05 there was a base realignment and closure. Everybody knows it as the BRAC. They were closing bases all over the country. Why don't we take one of those bases that are closed down and have the infrastructure around and look at one of those? It's not that I don't want [you] guys to get trained. There's going to be a lot of foreign nationals get train[ing] here. That's fine too. Let them get trained and the best trainings from our guys. Great. Awesome.

Don't sit there and tear up farmland. Don't uproot a county, tear up a county, and divide a county. We've got base[s] where the cities around are crumbling because the bases were closed down. Open them back up. I don't know if anyone is here listening but this is what I have to say.

There is a gentlemen who made a comment that because we're against this we're un-American. I'm not going to call your name out. But I'd like to know what branch of the service you were in-- what you did for your country.

I spent four years as an Army medic-- from 2000 to 2004. And how dare you, sir, say I'm not American for not wanting this.

(Applause).

I think one of the biggest things is there's just absolutely no trust in the government, period. I'd like to think that it comes down to something that is just as common sense as, you know, you could possibly think.

Young man sitting there wanted to know what was going to happen to the wildlife and everything around here.

January 1st for this year I took pictures of four bald eagles sitting in my trees. I live on Little Eagle Farm. It was named that for that for a particular reason. I also probably have one of the largest concentrations of Delmarva fox squirrels in the area. Both on the endangered species list. And, you know, hopefully, you know, it's something that [is] as simple as this that can put a stop to this.

One of the ladies made a comment about living in an old house. 90 percent of the houses I know of in Ruthsburg [are old houses]. I've been in them. I'd like to know where the responsibility is going to lie when 3-pound bombs are going off and this lady's chimneys that [is] put together out of sand, starts to deteriorate and eventually chokes off and either they're asphyxiated by carbon monoxide or it catches on fire and God forbid somebody in that house dies.

(Applause).

I've spent a lifetime, my lifetime, building a dream that I've got. And fortunately I raised some of the best horses in the entire country at what I particularly do.

I want to know what's going to happen when one of those bombs goes off and one of my animals decides to run through a fence and -- (inaudible) or somebody's out riding. We got young man sitting out there that, you know, has just started competitively roping and everything. I'd like to know what happens when something

happens and, you know, the horse freaks out and drags him to death. If you've ever seen that-- I have-- it's pretty brutal.

But it all boils down to just common sense. These people have not given us any reason at all to trust them. And, you know, that's [the] biggest factor. We don't need this in our backyard. I don't oppose the selling of that property for, you know, other means. But it doesn't need to be for what they're proposing out here. Because once they get in there, they have eminent domain. And they can do anything behind those walls that they want to do.

And I for one have no problems with going to jail for what I believe in and protecting my family.

(Applause).

So I do promise I will be one of their worst neighbors that they can envision.

(Applause).

Good evening. I live -- I don't even live in this county. But I live close. And I've spent 42 years of my life and my tax money. And if this thing were to go through, my little farm that I've put my whole life into would be worth nothing. And the government has not paid me a dime to keep that farm. I've struggled to keep it paid for. I've raised my children, my four children on the farm in a good environment. A good environment.

It's peaceful around here. And I want to keep it that way.

(Applause).

I live in Caroline county. I'm not far away. If I wanted to I could walk from my house to this area. It would a little bit of a walk but I could do it. I ride by that area every day. And I think, boy, would I like to hunt on that property. But as you all know, nobody's been allowed to. Never been allowed to for years.

But to waste this large, beautiful, agricultural tract of land so something the government wants to do -- and as far as I'm concerned why don't they go to Guantanamo bay and start using it again. There are plenty of places around, like other people have said, that could be used for this. They don't need to come and disrupt our way of life that we've all put our money and our hearts and souls into to do something like this. Now, I know there's not one person in here that's against good training. But there are plenty of places out in the middle of the desert that they could do it.

(Applause).

So that's what I'm saying.

(Applause).

I think our stimulus money is far better spent at 301 and 304 for the overpass.

(Applause).

I think the only way we're going stop this if you contact the politician[s]-- everybody in here-- [you have] got to contact the Governor, Centreville. We [have] got to make a voice. We got to make them hear. Because if we don't it's going to go.

(Applause).

How many people raise your hands have contacted your officials . . . seriously.

(Hands).

Everybody in here has to contact the politicians. They don't want [thi]s. They'll do it for votes.

Just [use] the Internet. Just email them. Yeah, just send it out to everybody. Do you want know [how to] say it again?

Yeah.

All right all right. It's not [my] fault. They're forcing me to come back up. How many -- all right raise some hands so I can see. How many have actually contacted their government officials

(Hands).

Look at all the people who haven't. And I'm not blaming you. I know you've got busy lives and families I understand that. But if you want this to go away that's how we're going to do it. They can't ignore 300 emails in a day that says subject Ruthsburg-- or FASTC.

We came [across] one a little analogy today that was kind of funny. Everybody remembers Dr. Seuss. We don't live in Centreville anymore. We live in Whoville. Remember little Whos. We're here we're here. They're not listening. They don't know we're here. We almost put a sign up here welcome to Whoville. But we figured [we] better not.

But that's what we need to do. We need to let them know how we feel. And if we're quiet and wait till, you know, we'll let her do it and him do it. It's not going to work. We have to ban together as one unit. One unit.

And if you're for this or haven't quite made up your mind, think about, you know, the Whoville thing. I know it's funny and ha ha ha. Dr. Zeus--but seriously. They don't know we're here. They don't know what beauty there is in this area. Bald eagle, the horses, all the different animals. What it's going to do to our water supply. They're talking about the bay and preserving the bay. What's this going to do to the Bay? You know, all of that. So there are so many issues. Pick your issue and figure

what you want to put down. But you know how easy to put it right in an email and send to it everybody. In five minutes you could have fifty people reading your email. It's important. We've got to say something. Thank you.

(Applause).

Can I just give one more brief [comment]? Something I've noticed is that I haven't heard anybody from the farm bureau make a statement. "Yes or no" up here tonight. And it might be asked, where are they? Why are they?

(inaudible).

Yeah-- but about the time it's half built they'll take a position? Just think about it.

Thanks.