

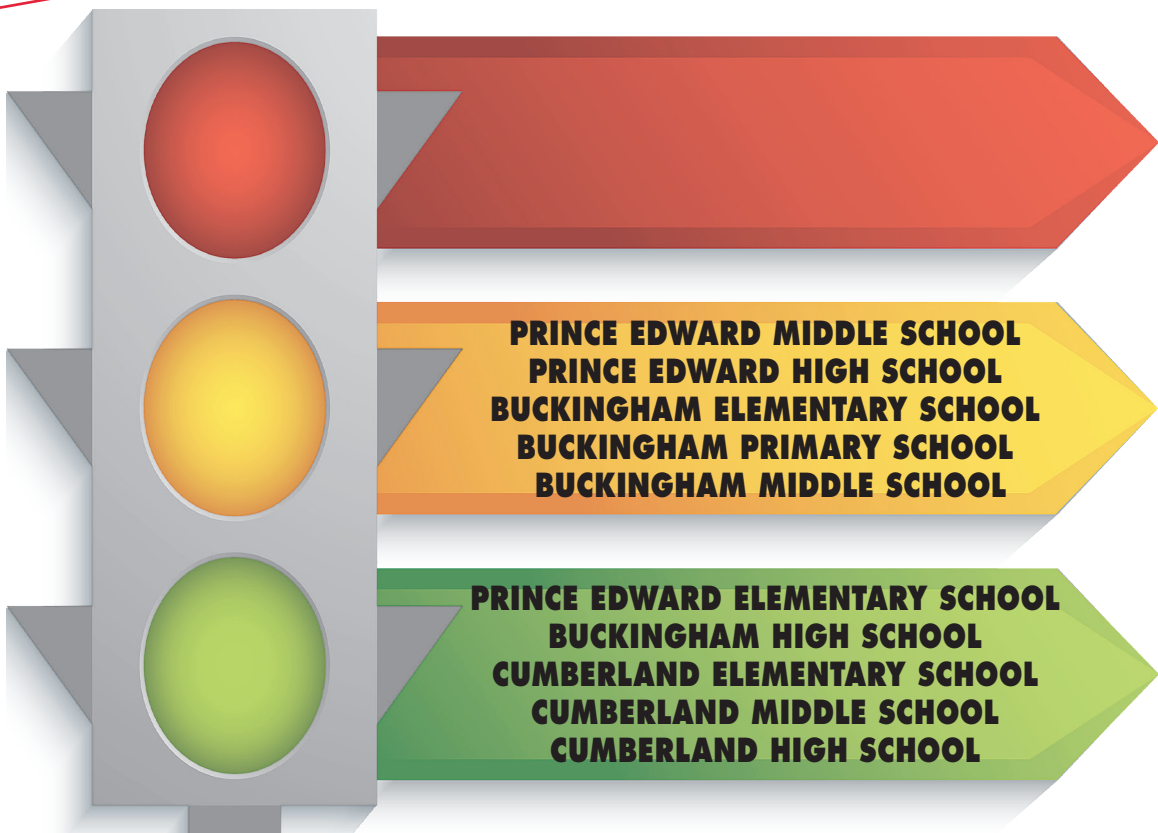
The Farmville Herald

Honor for the past, help for the present, hope for the future

Farmville, Virginia

Wednesday, September 28, 2022

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**PRINCE EDWARD MIDDLE SCHOOL
PRINCE EDWARD HIGH SCHOOL
BUCKINGHAM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
BUCKINGHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL
BUCKINGHAM MIDDLE SCHOOL**

**PRINCE EDWARD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
BUCKINGHAM HIGH SCHOOL
CUMBERLAND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
CUMBERLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL
CUMBERLAND HIGH SCHOOL**

Despite growth, schools struggle

BY BRIAN CARLTON
The Farmville Herald

This year's accreditation ratings were a mixed bag for schools in Prince Edward County. On the one hand, Prince Edward Elementary came in fully accredited with no conditions, meeting or exceeding state standards across the board. The news wasn't as good for the middle and high school, with a couple glaring issues being highlighted in the data.

PRINCE EDWARD

The Virginia Department of Education decides if an individual school is accredited, or meets state standards, based on six categories. The state looks at a school's English pass rate,

See **STRUGGLE**, Page A2

Scores rise in other districts

BY BRIAN CARLTON
The Farmville Herald

The numbers look good for schools in both Cumberland and Buckingham counties. This year's accreditation ratings were released Thursday, Sept. 22, showing significant improvements in both school districts. All Cumberland schools were fully accredited, while several in Buckingham did improve, but fell just short of the state benchmark in

See **SCORES**, Page A5

Rowan set for hearing in murder case

BY JAMES ROBINSON
The Farmville Herald

Christopher Michael Rowan returns to court this week. The 32-year-old Crewe resident will have a review hearing as he faces charges of first-degree murder and use of a firearm in the commission of a felony, first offense.



Christopher Michael Rowan

The charges stem from an incident that happened Thursday, June 2 of this year. The Nottoway Sheriff's Office was called out in response to shots being fired at a home in the 3000

block of West Courthouse Road in Nottoway.

See **ROWAN**, Page A7

Who's running in local elections?

BY RACHEL AUSTIN
The Farmville Herald

Who's running for office? That's a question we've received several times here at *The Herald* and we're doing a couple things to answer it.

Early voting started across the region on Friday, Sept. 23. As a result, residents of Buckingham, Cumberland and Prince Edward counties can now cast a ballot for their preferred candidates in general and special elections.

See **ELECTIONS**, Page A11

What transport changes are needed, officials ask

BY RACHEL AUSTIN
The Farmville Herald

How would you change roads in this region? Do we need more public transportation? What about sidewalks and walkable neighborhoods? Transportation affects everyone's daily lives whether they use it or not. Now, residents have the chance to tell leaders how it can be improved in this area.

Residents of Amelia, Appomattox, Buckingham, Charlotte, Cumberland, Lunenburg, Prince Edward and Nottoway counties can participate in the Community Transportation Survey by Oct. 3 to make their voices heard.

In late 2021, Centra Health did a study to assess the needs of this region. The four main needs identified were transportation, food, mental health and housing. A committee was formed for each and for transportation, the members created a survey to see what and where the needs are in these counties.

"We want to look at what to do to bridge the gaps and how to best do that is to gather data from the people who live it," said Sharon Harrup, president and CEO of Steps Inc. who is assisting with this project. "Once we gather the data we can reach out to government institutions, the (Virginia) Department of Rail & Public Transportation, schools, Headstart and others to get access to vehicles

See **TRANSPORT**, Page A7



DAN PEMPEL

Lakeside Drive home totaled after Friday fire

One home on Farmville's Lakeside Drive was totaled after a fire Friday morning. The Farmville Fire Department received a call at 9:52 a.m., arriving to find heavy fire already coming from the residence. Hampden-Sydney and Prospect fire departments, along with the Prince Edward County Rescue Squad, all assisted in fighting the blaze. By 12:09 p.m., the fire had been extinguished, but the house was a total loss. Farmville Fire Chief Daniel Clark said no one was at home at the time of the fire. The only injury, Clark said, came as one firefighter suffered some heat-related symptoms. Clark said the firefighter was evaluated by Prince Edward Rescue but didn't seek any further medical care. The family that lived at the residence is being helped by the Red Cross and as of Monday morning, a cause for the blaze had not been determined.



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CHS Girls Track recognized by School Board

Cumberland High School's 2022 State Runner-Up Girls Track Team was recognized by the members of the county school board at their September meeting. Members of the team pictured are, from left, front row, Nolanda Henderson Lakyra Bartee, Nakyra Bartee and Samara Long. Back row, Kaliyah Braxton, Christina Jones, Taylor Hughes, and Coach Kenneth Jasey. Not pictured was Shamoni Bartee.



STRUGGLE: 'An intense focus on literacy and science'

FROM PAGE ONE

English achievement gaps, math pass rate, math achievement gaps, science pass rate and if there is chronic absenteeism. If a school doesn't meet state standards for multiple years, then the Department of Education steps in to help determine what's needed to address the issues.

Now there are a few exceptions. Elementary schools, for example, aren't judged on science pass rates because that test is first given in the fifth grade. And to give schools one more year to adjust post-pandemic, the state isn't including chronic absenteeism in this year's assessment.

When it comes to the middle and high school, the data showed, and district officials acknowledge, there's still work to do in most of those categories.

A SPOTLIGHT ON PRINCE EDWARD ELEMENTARY

First, the good news. The data shows Prince Edward Elementary met or exceeded all of the state standards for English and math. The school also closed achievement gaps in both subjects, improving beyond state standards.

During their meeting on Wednesday, Sept. 7, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Dr. Michelle Wallace, told the Prince Edward School Board these improvements were a reflection of work done over the last two years.

"(We worked on) getting our curriculum straight, getting literacy plans in place, getting math plans in place, (plus) the efforts of tutoring our children to get them over the hump of missing what they missed during the pandemic," Wallace told the board.

The school's improvements are particularly impressive in that it's happening across the board. All student groups at Prince Edward Elementary are improving. The growth is happening on all grade levels as well.

This marks the first time since before 2018 that the elementary school exceeded state standards in English. And to be clear, it was a pretty significant jump. In 2018, 72% of students passed or showed significant improvement in English. That number fell to 64% in 2019, the last time the pass rates were recorded. This time around, 83% of Prince Edward Elementary students hit that mark, almost 10% higher than the state standard of 75%.

An estimated 88% of students at the school either passed both their math and science tests or showed significant improvement. This is the fourth straight year of growth in both areas and the third year of achievement above 80%.

Prince Edward County Superintendent Dr. Barbara Johnson said she was proud of the work being done, praising students, teachers and staff.

"The elementary school is fully accredited and those students showed significant growth," Johnson said. "This is particularly impressive given the challenges of the last year."

CONCERNS ABOUT PRINCE EDWARD MIDDLE

Things were a bit different at Prince Edward County Middle School. Each school receives a "quality rating" of Level One, Two or Three when being considered for accreditation. Level One means you meet or exceed the state standards. Level Two means you're showing improvement, but haven't quite got there yet. Finally, Level Three means there are issues, as the school is performing below state standards.

In math and science, Prince Edward Middle came in at Level Three. Science especially took a nosedive, with only 42% of students passing the state tests. In 2019, that number for the middle school was 61% and 60% in 2018. Math, meanwhile, was better, coming in

at 70%. That's up from 68% in 2019.

The school also came in at a Level Three for achievement gaps in English and math, with the state saying students weren't showing enough growth.

During the school board's Sept. 7 meeting, Wallace said the middle school was bouncing back after a series of issues.

"(The) middle school had its own set of challenges last year," Wallace told the board. "Particularly with staffing and some with discipline, which does impact achievement."

She pointed out the school was understaffed in some critical areas last year. That's improved this semester, with less than a dozen unfilled positions across the entire district. Also, despite the school not fully meeting state standards, Wallace pointed out that the scores are improving.

Speaking to *The Herald*, Johnson said she was pleased to see some progress, but more work was needed.

"Our middle school students made progress in mathematics and there is an intense focus on literacy and science this year," Johnson said.

SCORES GO UP AT PRINCE EDWARD HIGH

The news was better for Prince Edward High, where scores improved but fell just short of state standards. A total of 74% of students either passed their English test or showed significant improvement. That's just 1% below the state standard of 75%. It was a similar story in math, where 63% of students either passed or showed significant improvement. That's seven points off the state standard of 70%. It's worth mentioning that those math scores showed the biggest jump at the school, going from 52% in 2018 and 2019 to 63% this year.

The only problem area comes in science. Only 48% of Prince Edward High students passed their science tests, down from 63% in 2019 and 70% in 2018. The state standard for science is a 70% pass rate.

Johnson said at the high school, and every school, teachers were working to improve those scores.

"We are working in partnership with the state to implement hand-on strategies for students to increase the rigor and engagement in all of our classrooms," she added.

A PROBLEM WITH ABSENTEEISM

And then there's a looming problem. State officials didn't count chronic absenteeism over the last two years, due to the pandemic. The same was true this year. But that doesn't mean it's not an issue here.

Both the middle and elementary school rated as a Level Two, improving but not quite at state standards. At Prince Edward Middle, 30.9% of students were chronically absent. For Prince Edward Elementary, that number was 27.5%.

The number at Prince Edward High, meanwhile, was significantly higher. During the 2021-22 school year, 47.74% of students were chronically absent at the high school. Wallace warned the board on Sept. 7 they can't get the middle and high school accredited without conditions until this issue is fixed, as the state will start counting chronic absenteeism again in 2023. And it's not something the schools can fix on their own.

"Our teachers are doing everything they can to get students to school," Wallace told the board. "We're calling them. We're making home visits. We are going to the homes, we are knocking on the doors, we are giving them alarm clocks. We are picking them up if they let us know they need a ride if they miss the bus. (And we) do what we can to get the kids to school."

Wallace said the district needs parents to make sure students get to school.

"We can do all the great things with student achievement, but if kids don't come to school and our absenteeism doesn't improve, our schools will continue to be accredited with conditions," she told the board.

What she and other district officials are asking for is community support. They're asking churches to encourage attendance, along with any employers some of the older high school students have. The same goes for coaches or even family friends.

Wallace said the district works with the local Department of Social Services on the issue as well. In Virginia, parents can lose their EBT card and other benefits if they don't send their children to school.

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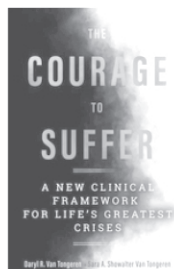


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FINDING MEANING IN SUFFERING: AUTHOR TALK & BOOK SIGNING



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Daryl Van Tongeren & Sara Showalter Van Tongeren, authors of *The Courage to Suffer: A New Clinical Framework for Life's Greatest Crises*, will share about mental health, resilience, finding meaning in the struggle, and more.

Free copies of the book will given out while supplies last.

If you have questions concerning access, or if you wish to request disability-related accommodations, please contact Greenwood Library at 434-395-2433.

This program is part of the project, Well-Being in the Heart of Campus: Community Connections at Greenwood Library, a partnership between Greenwood Library and Longwood CAPS. This project was made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, ARPML-250933-OMLS-22

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Southside SPCA needs donations

BY RACHLE AUSTIN
The Farmville Herald

The problem started over the last year. As people lost jobs, they could no longer afford to take care of their animals. Others went back into the office and decided they didn't have time to care for any pets. In many cases, that meant turning dogs and cats over to the Southside Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA).

"We are very full," said Steve Smelcer, a member of the Southside board of directors. "As soon as one is adopted out

we are pulling from county shelters and filling right back up."

The SPCA has seen an increase in surrendered pets from Farmville and the surrounding area. Extra animals means an increased need for all kinds of supplies. That's where the community comes in.

A NEED FOR HELP

With a constant cycle of dogs and cats calling the SPCA their temporary home, many supplies are needed to keep up with the demand. Dog and cat food along with treats

are always at the top of the list. The shelter can also use collars, leashes, cat litter, pet cleaning supplies, paper towels and more.

Folks can visit Amazon to see a wishlist of the specific items and preferred brands the Southside SPCA needs. Amazon users can also choose Southside SPCA as their charity of choice when using Amazon Smile, which donates a percent of the purchase price. With the holidays coming up, folks can buy gifts to give to family and friends while also giving support to a good cause. "We greatly appreciate all of

the public's help and support as we are totally donor funded and they always come through for us," said Smelcer.

The Southside SPCA constantly has fundraising events in the works. Folks can check southsidespca.org to stay up to date on the next event.

WHAT IS SOUTHSIDE SPCA?

The Southside SPCA is an independent, donor-supported nonprofit organization dedicated to helping companion animals in Southside Virginia. Being a no-kill shelter, the SPCA does what it can to make sure the dogs and cats in its

care are taken care of until they find a loving home.

According to Smelcer, monetary donations are always welcome. Being a donor-supported nonprofit, the shelter relies on monetary donations to pay the bills to keep the shelter open and the animals in its care fed.

Anyone wanting to drop off donations can do so from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. seven days a week at the shelter, located at 7352 Patrick Henry Highway, Meherrin. Or you can drop off donations during operating hours at Tail Waggers Thrift Store at 439 Railroad Ave., Keyville.

SCORES: The numbers keep climbing for Cumberland

FROM PAGE ONE

some cases.

The Virginia Department of Education decides if an individual school is accredited, or meets state standards, based on six categories. The state looks at a school's English pass rate, English achievement gaps, math pass rate, math achievement gaps, science pass rate and if there is chronic absenteeism. If a school doesn't meet state standards for multiple years, then the Department of Education steps in to help determine what's needed to address the issues.

A PERFECT SCORE FOR CUMBERLAND

In Cumberland County, the elementary, middle and high school all showed improvement in multiple areas. Each school receives a "quality rating" of Level One, Two or Three when being considered for accreditation. Level One means you meet or exceed the state standards. Level Two means you're showing improvement, but haven't quite got there yet. Finally, Level Three means there are issues, as the school is performing below state standards.

In Cumberland's case, most of the ratings for all three schools came in at Level One. English scores showed the most growth for Cumberland High, with 85% of students passing their test. The state standard, by comparison, is 75%. It's also the highest passing percentage for the school since 2018, when 81% passed. The only issue for the school came in math, where only 42% of Cumberland High students passed or showed significant growth.

The news was similar at Cumberland Elementary School. The passing percentage for English increased here too, jumping from 73% in 2019 to 82%. Math passing rates at the elementary

were also impressive, coming in at 86%, compared to the state standard of 70%.

Finally at Cumberland Middle, the script was reversed a bit, with math coming in as the best pass rate at 84%. This wasn't a surprise. You would have to go back before 2019 to see math pass rates below 80% at the middle school. The only issue for Cumberland Middle students came in science, where only 50% passed the state test or showed significant improvement. That's a drop from 78% in 2019.

Cumberland Superintendent Chip Jones said he was proud of the work his teachers, students, staff and others did to get to this point.

"Our success in regards to accreditation is the result of commitment and collaboration among our students, the entire CuCPS team and the support from the Cumberland community," Jones said.

BUCKINGHAM OFFICIALS SEE IMPROVEMENT

Meanwhile in Buckingham County, each of the schools improved in some areas, while falling short in others.

For example, Buckingham Elementary and Buckingham Primary both struggled with pass rates in science. Only 41% of students at Buckingham Primary either passed the test or showed significant improvement. The number was identical at Buckingham Elementary.

For Buckingham Middle, the problem was English. Even though they improved, with 67% passing, compared to 66% in 2019, the school fell short of the 75% standard set by the state. Math, on the other hand, wasn't a problem. The school's 84% pass rate was much higher than the state's 70% benchmark.

And finally, there's Buckingham

High, the school in the district fully accredited by the state. Students exceeded state standards across the board, with math a specific highlight. In 2019, the school reported that

73% of students either passed or showed significant improvement on the math test. This time around, that number spiked to 86%.

"We feel good about our position, with Buckingham High School being fully accredited and the Middle School, Elementary and Primary all being accredited with conditions," said Buckingham Superintendent Dr. John Keeler. "We have a plan to address the deficiencies that we need to improve and are busy with the implementation of our plans."

Keeler also said the district is implementing new programs to moti-

vate students by recognizing academic success and behaviors. The goal is to emphasize the positive, to encourage continued improvement.



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WED., SEPT. 28
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THURS., SEPT. 29
Teen Miss & Miss Five
County Fair Pageants

THURS., SEPT. 29
College Students Admitted Free
With College Photo ID.

FRI., SEPT. 30
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FAIR PROGRAM

TUESDAY, SEPT. 27TH - Fair Opens at 5 p.m. Cole Shows Amusement will open our 2022 Midway at 6 p.m., weather permitting. Beef Cattle and Sheep and Goats entered from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Youth Beef Show will be at 6:30 p.m. in the Varner Bldg. Youth Sheep and Goat Show to follow. Petting Zoo.

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 28TH - Fair Opens at 3 p.m. Midway starts at 4 p.m., weather permitting. Petite, Little and JR Miss Pageants will be at 7 p.m. in Varner Building. Free Admission for Students until 7 p.m. with Fair School Tickets. Home School Students can get their School tickets at Admission Gate. Petting Zoo.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 29TH - Fair Opens at 3 p.m. Midway starts at 4 p.m., weather permitting. Teen and Miss Five County Fair Pageant will be at 7:30 p.m. in Varner Building. Free Admission for Students until 7 p.m. with Fair School Tickets. Home School Students can get their School tickets at Admission Gate. College students FREE with college ID. Youth Dairy entries from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Magic Show today on the grounds. Petting Zoo.

FRIDAY, SEPT. 30TH - Fair Opens at 5 p.m. Midway starts at 6pm, weather permitting. Dairy Show will be at 6:30 p.m. in Varner Building. Magic Show today on the grounds. Petting Zoo.

SATURDAY, OCT 1ST - Fair Opens at 3 p.m. Closing Night of the 2022 Fair. Midway starts at 4 p.m., weather permitting. Magic Show today on the grounds. Professional Wrestling will be at 8 p.m. in the Varner Building. Petting Zoo.

All Events and opening each day, are subject to change.

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CUMBERLAND COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS PUBLIC HEARINGS

The Cumberland County Board of Supervisors will meet on Tuesday, October 11, 2022, at 7:00 p.m., or as soon thereafter as may be heard, in the Circuit Courtroom of Cumberland County in Cumberland, Virginia, to conduct public hearings pursuant to Virginia Code Section 15.2-2204, which such hearings may be continued or adjourned, as required under applicable law, and to consider the following items and taking actions in furtherance thereof:

• **Code Amendment (CA) 22-07: Conditional Use Permit Renewals** - This amendment to chapter 74 of the Cumberland County Code will permit administrative renewals of conditional use permits when all conditions are met, and no violations have been confirmed.

• **Conditional Use Permit (CUP) 22-06: Camp Parsons Outdoor Facility** - This application is for a Recreational Facility, Campground and Archery Range located at 214 Woodhaven Trail, Cumberland, VA 23040. The property is identified as Tax Map 74-A-2J, a 21.3-acre parcel of land zoned A-2 Agricultural. The property is not located in a growth area as noted in the Comprehensive Plan and is within election district 4.

• **Conditional Use Permit (CUP) 22-07: Cartersville Park** - This application is a request for a conditional use permit for a Recreational Facility to be located on County-owned property at 12 Samuels Drive, Cartersville, VA 23027. The property is identified as tax map parcel 17-A-36, a 32.936-acre lot. The property is not located in a growth area as noted in the Comprehensive Plan and is within election district 1.

• **Conditional Use Permit (CUP) 22-08: Madison Sports Complex** - This application is a request for a conditional use permit for a Recreational Facility to be located on County-owned property at 6 Old Buckingham Road, Cumberland, VA 23040. The property is identified as tax map parcel 57-A-59, an 8.00-acre parcel of land zoned R-2. The property is located in the high intensity Courthouse growth area as noted in the Comprehensive Plan and is within election district 3.

• **Conditional Use Permit (CUP) 22-09: Luther P. Jackson Park** - This application is a request for a conditional use permit for a Recreational Facility to be located on Community Center Drive, Cumberland, VA 23040. The property is identified as tax map parcel 65A3-A-4, a 15.00-acre parcel of land zoned R-2/A-2. The property is located in the high intensity Courthouse growth area as noted in the Comprehensive Plan and is within election district 3.

• **Conditional Use Permit (CUP) 22-10: Randolph Park** - This application is a request for a conditional use permit for a Recreational Facility to be located on County-owned property at 2632 Cumberland Road, Farmville, VA 23901. The property is identified as tax map parcel 81-A-58A, a 22.27-acre parcel of land zoned A-2. The property is not located within a growth area as noted in the Comprehensive Plan and is within election district 4.

Copies of the complete text of the proposed applications and amendments are available for public review at the office of the Cumberland County Planning Department, County Administration Building, 1 Courthouse Circle, Cumberland, Virginia between 8:30 am and 4:30 pm of each business day. The public is invited to attend these hearings at which persons affected may appear and present their views orally or in writing. Questions or comments may be directed to the Planning & Zoning Department, at (804) 492-3520. Persons with disabilities are urged to contact the County Administrator's Office at (804) 492-3625 at least five (5) days prior to the meeting to arrange for any necessary accommodations.