

BULL RUN OBSERVER™

Friday, January 17, 2014

WESTERN PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY'S FAVORITE HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER www.bullrunnow.com

Vol. 15 No. 11 ONE DOLLAR

6 the BULL RUN OBSERVER January 17, 2014

www.bullrunobserver.info & www.bullrunnow.com

A new kind of village and landscape now being developed in Haymarket

By E. BRUCE DAVIS
Observer staff

A new concept in development within the rural crescent is being tried at Villages of Piedmont at Leopold's Preserve, within a mile of the town of Haymarket.

The housing is being clustered in one area, and the open space is

laged in the middle of the woods with more access to more open space. I think it will be a model for Western Prince William County."

The property is located in the rural crescent, south of Interstate 66 at the intersection of US 15 (James Madison Highway) and Market Ridge Blvd.

Plein believes in giving back.

ology Society of Virginia. It held a workshop with the Valley Conservation Council and hosted interested visitors.

During Plein's eight years of owning The White House Farm and his foundation, the property has served as a proving ground for

many characteristics adopted by the one-of-a-kind Villages of Piedmont at Leopold's Preserve.

The foundation's website reads, "We are excited about our current projects and realize the vision for the White House Farm Foundation. We're interested in

various aspects of how to live more sustainably on the land and use our natural resources wisely. Our desire is to work with the community and our partners to answer some of the large questions now facing

continued on page 7



E. Bruce Davis / the Bull Run Observer

Scott Plein explains details on a plat of Villages of Piedmont at Leopold's Preserve.

beig clustered in another, with careful efforts toward environmental and historic preservation.

After a bank foreclosure of a prior developer, Equinox Investments, LLC was chosen to complete the project. Scott Plein is the principal of Equinox Investments.

A former president of the Northern Virginia Building Industry Association (NVBIA), Plein has made a name for himself for protecting an environment and its history. His firm specializes in community planning, entitlements and project developments.

He has also gotten good marks for his handling of his family's purchase of the White House Farm in Luray in 2005.

While considering how the property with one mile of waterfront property on the Shenandoah River should be used, he refurbished its barn and farm house. He considered subdividing the 270 acres into 52 residential lots. Instead, he converted the property into a permanent conservation easement in 2009 and established the White House Farm Foundation in 2010.

Although some houses at the Villages of Piedmont are already built, Equinox is making changes in line with its dedication to preserving habitats.

Corey Stewart, chairman of the Prince William County Board of Supervisors, was initially skeptical of higher densities.

However, Plein appreciated Stewart was willing to listen.

"What sold me was clustering the homes together and having more open space surrounding the property," Stewart said. "It is a vil-

lages serving on many non-profit organizations and charitable groups.

Through his White House Farm Foundation, he hopes to instill others with an awareness and dedication to the natural ecological systems, sustainable agriculture, holistic community planning, conservation and respect for local history and culture.

Plein hopes to list the farm on the National Register of Historic Places. It is included on the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.

As a developer, Plein respects his bottom line, but he sees benefits that transcend the profit margin. Placing the White House Farm into a permanent conservation easement, maintained by the Virginia Outdoors Foundation, not only protects its beauty and agricultural activities but also allows him to work with neighboring people and institutions.

He developed partnerships at the White House Farm Foundation to help preserve the environment and provide local history education, and officials see this as a sign of similarities in this community.

The Virginia Department of Forestry helped with burns to regenerate warm weather grasses, improve wildlife habitat and research the effect on invasive species. Many educational institutions including Luray High School (FFA and GIS students), Massanutten Regional Governors School and Flint Hill School worked on farm projects. The foundation worked with Dr. Carole Nash, head of archeology at James Madison University, and Cindy Schroer of the Massanutten Chapter of the Arche-

THE GIRLS ARE COUNTING...

Guess how many houses
We sold last year.
1...2...3?



Seriously? Three?

55

That's 55 Successful Transactions
&
55 Happy Clients

If experience is important to you in your next
Real Estate Transaction-

We have 55 reasons why the
3 Girls of Real Estate will work for you!

Prudential
PenFed Realty
Gainesville, VA



New and experienced agents considered
Jeff Thiesing, Broker
703-396-6000

For an Experienced
Lender contact:

GEORGE MASON
MORTGAGE, LLC

Ric Segovia
Sr. Vice President

703-831-4531
NMLS#227595



Covington: New recipe for land use planning

continued from page 6

conservation and development.”

With similar tenets at the 493 acre Villages of Piedmont it is thought that the Haymarket subdivision will blaze a new trail for similar developments in Western Prince William County.

The Haymarket property is steeped in Native American history, worthy of preservation. To Plein the normal 10-acre lot density in the rural crescent fragments the landscape, as do five-acre plots and farmettes. In Haymarket, he proposed higher densities, includ-

ing town homes and smaller lot single family detached homes.

Issues include balance with the environment, importance of land conservation and support of local economies.

Covington, also a believer, said of his district's project, "Equinox is bringing a new recipe to the land use planning cookbook of the county. This project has all the right ingredients."

In the Villages of Piedmont, there will be 132 single family homes and 261 town homes clustered, with 386 open acres, preserved for perpetuity.

This protects habitats, as well

as allows the development to prosper among other things, five-mile trails and bridges, viewing platforms, interpretive boards and information kiosks to educate those on the trails about the site's flora, fauna and history.

Martin Nohe, Coles District supervisor, told Plein he loved the concept because Equinox Investments, LLC was building a community for normal middle class people.

Emulating the local community involvement at the White House Farm Foundation, many partnerships with Villages of Piedmont have been formed to preserve all aspects of the property, including its history.

Rainbow Therapeutic Riding Center is a good example of how the new community is giving back to its partners as well as including them at Leopold's Preserve.

"Scott Plein of Equinox Investments has been visiting Rainbow Center for two years," said Debi Alexander, executive director of Rainbow Center.

"He sponsored our 2nd and 3rd Annual Scott Kirby concerts and was an event sponsor for our FUN Show this year. But Scott Plein was watching Rainbow Center's development and wanted to ensure that we had a master plan for the overall design. He reached out to two of his partners, Christopher Consultants and KC Enterprises, and these three companies are creating a professional footprint for Rainbow."

He enlisted Christopher Consultants to create a master design

plan and KC Enterprises to identify non-toxic plants. Equinox agreed to supply the labor. Alexander and Plein, due to the proximity of their properties, envision a nature trail walk at Villages of Piedmont, providing benefits for Equine Assisted Activities.

Another partnership is The Virginia Native Plant Society that states it is "dedicated to the protection and preservation of the native plants of Virginia and their habitats, in order to sustain for generations to come the integrity of the Commonwealth's rich natural heritage of ecosystems and biodiversity for purposes of enjoyment, enlightenment, sustainable use, and our own very survival."

Virginia Tech College of Natural Resources and Environment, Conservation Management Institute will provide "field ecological expertise for Leopold's Preserve, the 386-acre nature preserve associated with the project and will interpret over half the interpretative signage on the property."

Peggy Stevens, executive director, said the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust will be responsible when the conservation easement is placed on the property to assure it is adhered to for perpetuity.

"Scott reached out to us years ago," said Linda Wright, president of the Buckland Preservation Society. She appreciates his background in landscaping and his desire to have a property zoned to reflect dedication to preserving local and historic properties.

The Journey through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area goes from Monticello to

Gettysburg, covering parts of Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Maryland and Virginia. U.S. 15 is designated a National Heritage Area, something that is dear to Buckland Preservation Society and Equinox Investments.

The Journey through Hallowed Ground is an important partner. Villages of Piedmont at Leopold's Preserve rests in the center of the Journey's National Heritage Area and Scenic Byway, a 180-mile stretch from Monticello to Gettysburg that pays homage to 620,000 civil war soldier casualties, some from this local area.

Names are significant to Plein. The property is named after a well-known nature conservationist, Aldo Leopold, called by some, "the father of wildlife management of the United States' wilderness system."

Equinox Investments, LLC was carefully named. An equinox occurs just twice a year when the plane of the equator passes the center of the Sun. The tilt of the Earth's axis is inclined neither away from nor towards the Sun.

"The Sun is on the equator at fall and spring," said Plein. "There is balance."

His Equinox logo is half in white, half in black. "That is the yin and the yang," he explains of two opposite forces that often bring balance to each other.

Balance is important to Plein's passion, the science of preservation-oriented land planning.

About Villages of Piedmont at Leopold's Preserve, Stewart concluded, "I think Scott and the county hit the bull's eye on this one." More information is available at www.vopii.com.



Celebrate the beginning of this year with Vita Nova Medical Spa.

Service of the Month:

ECO2- Rejuvenate your skin by taking 3 years off!
Skin Tightening and Resurfacing. \$700 OFF

January 14th-16th:
3-Day Sale.

Fillers 15% OFF

Botox \$10/Unit

Dysport \$3.17/Unit

ALL Packages 25% OFF, includes Zerona, Reaction,
Laser Hair Reduction, Facials, and much more!

Products 20% OFF



9401 Centreville Road, Suite 203 Manassas, VA 20110

vitanovamedspa.com

703.361.3232

Se Habla Español

FLOORS for LIFE

Carpet, Hardwood, Laminate, Vinyl, Ceramic, Area Rugs

703-754-9797 (office) • 703-257-9998 (cell)

Visit Our Showroom In Gainesville
Piedmont Center Plaza

(Across from Haymarket Post Office behind buildings near Rainbow Station)
6832 Piedmont Center Plaza, Unit C-7

Solid, Pre-finished Hardwood
\$6.99/sq. ft. installed

We Beat All Competitors' Prices Including Home Improvement Centers

Serving Bristow, Gainesville, Haymarket, Nokesville, Manassas Since 2003 - Thousands of Satisfied Customers

FLOORS for LIFE

\$100 OFF

with any purchase of \$1000 or more

With this ad. Not valid with prior purchases or any other offers. Expires February 21, 2014.

NEW!
\$1.99/sq. ft. Installed
Mohawk Plush Carpet
Lifetime Stain, Pet Urine & Soil Warranty

New Arrival of Oriental & Area Rugs up to 60% Off

- FREE Carpet Installation
- FREE Moving of Regular Furniture
- FREE Estimates
- No Added Charges!
- No Hidden Fees!

Carpet • Hardwood • Vinyl • Area Rugs • Laminate • and More!