

THE STAFFORD ROTARY HIGHLIGHTER

March 13, 2024



Rotary Club of Stafford  **People of Action**

March 13 Program – Samantha Mitzel UMW Rotaract President

My name is Sam, and I am a student at the University of Mary Washington and president of the university's Rotaract Club. I have been involved with Rotary for the past seven years since the beginning of high school! I've always enjoyed community service and self-development to make a meaningful difference to those around me and the community. I am currently studying at university for a major in biomedical sciences, and a minor in neuroscience to go to graduate school for optometry. Outside of school and extracurricular activities, I work as a certified medical assistant at an urgent care where I get hands-on patient care. I also enjoy baking, reading, and going outdoors to do activities such as kayaking!



I look forward to seeing everyone at the upcoming meeting to discuss a few projects UMW Rotaract has been working on including Relay for Life, and the first Interact Summit of District 7610!

March 6 Meeting

President Jamie presided and welcomed guests Sue Henderson and visiting Rotarian John Cocker from the Rappahannock Rotary.

PDG Sandy gave the thought for the day:

Club Calendar March Is Water and Sanitation Month

- ❖ March 13 - Samantha Mitzel UMW Rotaract President
- ❖ March 20 - Dr. Thomas Taylor - STAFFORD COUNTY School Superintendent
- ❖ March 27 - Tommi Marsans
- ❖ March 30 – RLI in Warrenton.
- ❖ March 30 – Club Social, Escape Room, 6 pm
- ❖ April 2, 4:00pm to 7:00 pm- Thurman Brisben Center - Help us cook and serve dinner
- ❖ April 10 – UMW Alumni
- ❖ April 27 - District Training Assembly - April 2024
- ❖ May 2 – Virginia Naturalists
- ❖ May 25-29, 2024 -Rotary International Convention in Singapore
- ❖ June 30 – Installation of New Officers
- ❖ August 11-13 – District trip to RI HQ
- ❖ September 28, 29 -Via Colori
- ❖ October 4-6, 2024 – District Conference

*One song can spark a moment, One flower can wake the dream.
One tree can start a forest, One bird can herald spring.
One smile begins a friendship, One handclasp lifts a soul.
One star can guide a ship at sea, One word can frame the goal
One vote can change a nation, One sunbeam lights a room
One candle wipes out darkness, One laugh will conquer gloom.
One step must start each journey. One word must start each prayer.
One hope will raise our spirits, One touch can show you care.
One voice can speak with wisdom, One heart can know what's true,
One life can make a difference, You see, it's up to you!*

Announcements:

- ❖ DG Rene gave a brief recap of Chesapeake PETS. 370 people attended. Our club was well represented.
- ❖ The tour of the sheriff's office was a fantastic activity. Club members were encouraged to order Girl Scout cookies from Kristy. They will be delivered to Sheriff Decatur.
- ❖ President Jamie discussed the possibility of helping the public safety officers by setting up additional relaxation rooms.
- ❖ March 23 – Bowling Social at Bowlero 7 pm
- ❖ March 30 – evening, around 7 pm, Axe Throwing social
- ❖ April 27 – District Training
- ❖ August 11-13 Trip RI HQ
- ❖ The evening meeting was well attended. We will continue this at least through June.
- ❖ Holly announced that her service dog has reached retirement age. She is in the process of training a new dog. She needs help monitor as she works with the new dog every day.
- ❖ We are still working on a date for the Channel 9 tour.
- ❖ Cheri announced there would be Discover Rotary meeting on Tuesday, March 19 at 6:30 at the Paradise Diner. She has invited people who attended previous meetings, as well as some new prospective members.
- ❖ Stafford Printing will no longer be an in-kind sponsor for Via Colori. We need to find a new sponsor.
- ❖ Kristy reported that essays for the District Essay Contest need to be submitted by March 22.
- ❖ PE Shekela reminded everyone that on April 2 we will be preparing and serving dinner at the Brisbane Center from 4 to 8 pm.
- ❖ PE Shekela will hold a planning meeting in April for incoming officers and committee chairs.

March 6 Program – Michael Allen Morris Stafford County Deputy County Administrator

Our speaker, Michael Morris, described the development planned around Embrey Mill and the Stafford Hospital and Medical Center, developments that are grouped in a plan known as Destination Stafford. Destination Stafford is a vision in progress. First envisioned over 20 years ago, Destination Stafford is a multi-generational community development project. Destination Stafford is planned as a “place” to create a “community identity” for all of Stafford County. It is planned to be a versatile or adaptable destination to encourage entrepreneurial growth, create a vibrant cultural and commercial district, and combine diverse restaurants, retail, and a myriad housing options to call home. It is a broad area, a landscape or canvas outlined in the Comprehensive Plan that will encompass multiple neighborhoods and phases of development. This redevelopment area consists of roughly 840 parcels that contain approximately 1,743 acres of developable land. The project includes a mix of commercial

and retail businesses at the core, surrounded by residential choices. The Plan establishes the desired roadway network in the Courthouse Area, designed to provide a hierarchical system of interconnected streets.

The vision for Destination Stafford encompasses five goals that foster and create sustainable and healthy growth in Stafford County. The development of the County's property in Destination Stafford offers an opportunity to put these goals into action.

❖ **Quality of life**

Create a new sense of place that is authentic to Stafford
Eco-friendly utilizing green and smart technology
Walkability and bikeability for residents and visitors
Variety of shops for dining, drinking, markets and gardens

❖ **Celebrate & Preserve Stafford's Heritage & Culture**

A focal point to celebrate and share in Stafford's heritage and culture
Home of Stafford's Museum and Cultural Center, including an event space.
Offer diverse business enterprises
Provide a location to market and offer local products and entertainment



❖ **Smart Stafford**

Provide smart technology that improves public safety, data security and training, and economic development and tourism
Serve as home for Virginia's Smart Community Testbed

❖ **Grow Entrepreneurial Ecosystem**

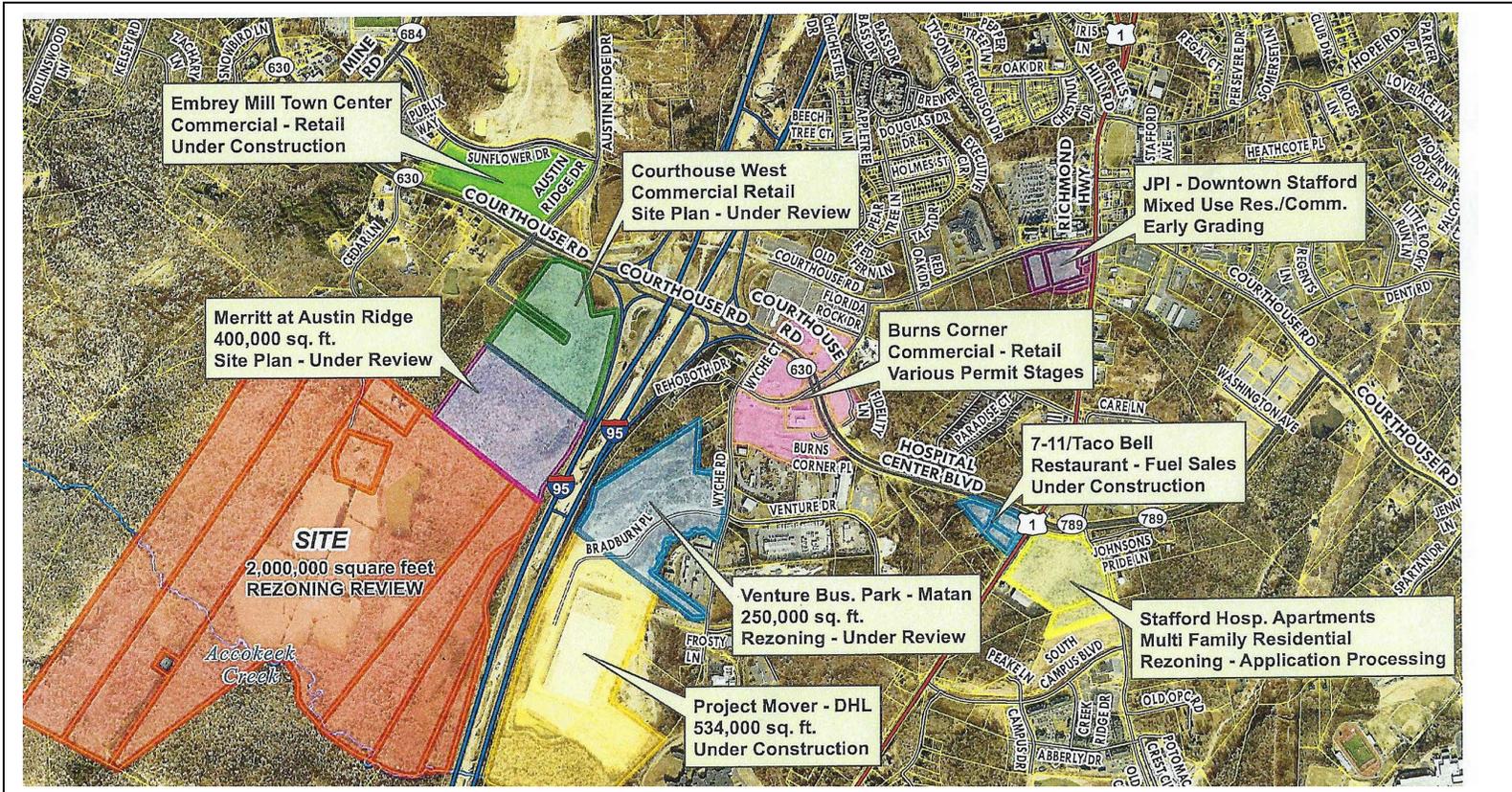
Serve as a center and catalyst for business growth and inclusion
Develop and enhance workforce opportunities
A place that can help foster a vibrant business community and attract diverse and create entrepreneurs
Cultivate smart technology innovation and development

❖ **Tourism Destination**

Enhance travelers' experience through digital connection and map integration communications
Showcase tourism events, community program, and local businesses to attract overnight visitors

Destination Stafford will help alleviate the "retail gap" in Stafford and provide for new investments and create community gathering places. In 2018, Stafford engaged Stantec Consulting to recommend how the County's 23 acres may be developed as part of Destination Stafford. Those plans suggested 92,000 square feet of retail space. Stantec estimated a \$1.3 Billion retail gap in Stafford County. The market will determine the final mix, but the County's 23 acres in Destination Stafford further closes the retail "gap" in Stafford County.

Mr. Morris also discussed the impact of the newly approved Amazon data center. When completed this complex will generate \$350 million annually in local taxes.



Mr. Morris’s presentation stimulated one of the longest question and answer sessions in our club’s history. The importance of that “retail gap” was evident in the questions. Club members were especially interested in the new Buc-ee’s that is scheduled to be built off of Exit 140, adjacent to Embrey Mill.

Other items of interest were:

- ❖ The location of the future new elementary school.
- ❖ Developments on Route 17.
- ❖ Aquia Town Center
- ❖ Replacement for the Regal Theater
- ❖ Roads for these developments?

The County is working on Transportation Master Plan with the goal of making improved and additional north-south routes to avoid I-95. The cost will be shared by VDOT and the County. All the work on I-95 has been paid for by federal and a much smaller portion by state funding.

Thank you, Mr. Morris, for an exciting presentation.

