

# MOUNT VERNON VOICE

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## Board Rejects Landfill Extension Supervisors Split 6-4 after Spirited Debate on Issue

By STEVE HUNT  
Staff Writer

As far as Gerry Hyland is concerned, a promise is a promise.

And not only that, for the Mount Vernon District supervisor it's a matter of public trust.

It was that point that Hyland drove home in his successful bid to deny the special application to expand and extend the life of the EnviroSolutions, Inc. construction debris landfill at Lorton at the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors meeting last week.

Prior to the vote, Hyland spent more than 20 minutes reading a statement that delved into the history of the site and explained, from his perspective, why the application should be denied.

"I do need to put this into the record," he began. "To say this application has given me heartburn is an understatement."

Hyland described the application, which included a green energy component as being "cloaked in a mantle of green," but as the layers are pulled back like an onion it brings tears to your eyes with the ultimate result of having "a deleterious effect" on the Lorton community.

He contrasted the original plan, which in 2007 had been to close the landfill by the end of 2018 and build a 250-acre community park with amenities to what has happened at the Hilltop site in Lee District where the Fairfax County Park Authority has assumed operation, with the ownership being retained by the Gailliot family which is also

course, the Workhouse Arts Center, and 1,600 small businesses.

He gave much of the credit to his colleagues on the board "for making this miracle happen -- I thank you."

But then like radio broadcaster Paul Harvey, it was the time "for the rest of the story."

In 2007, the board approved a plan allowing the landfill to operate for 11 more years with the condition that it would be closed

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*— Mt. Vernon Supervisor Gerry Hyland*

responsible for insuring the site.

"Why couldn't this happen at the ESI landfill?" he asked.

Since 1987, the Lorton and south county area has been transformed from an industrial area, with a DC prison housing 8,000 inmates "and a stinky garbage dump" some referred to as "the armpit of Fairfax County," to a thriving, residential community which has doubled its population in the past several years.

Hyland pointed out that Lorton has a new town center with restaurants and shopping, two new elementary schools, a new high school and a new middle school, the Inova Healthplex-Lorton, a world-class golf

by the end of 2018, and the land would be transferred to the park authority and the community would get a park with trails for pedestrians, bikes and horses, a bird sanctuary, an amphitheater, overlooks and open area for picnics and flying kites.

No one on the board of supervisors, county staff or Lorton community thought that that would not happen, he said.

But then, "the park authority balked" at having the former landfill decided to it, Hyland said.

And that put the whole plan in jeopardy. "So much for promises," he said.

In 2009, ESI stated it would not allow pub-

*See Landfill Page 10*



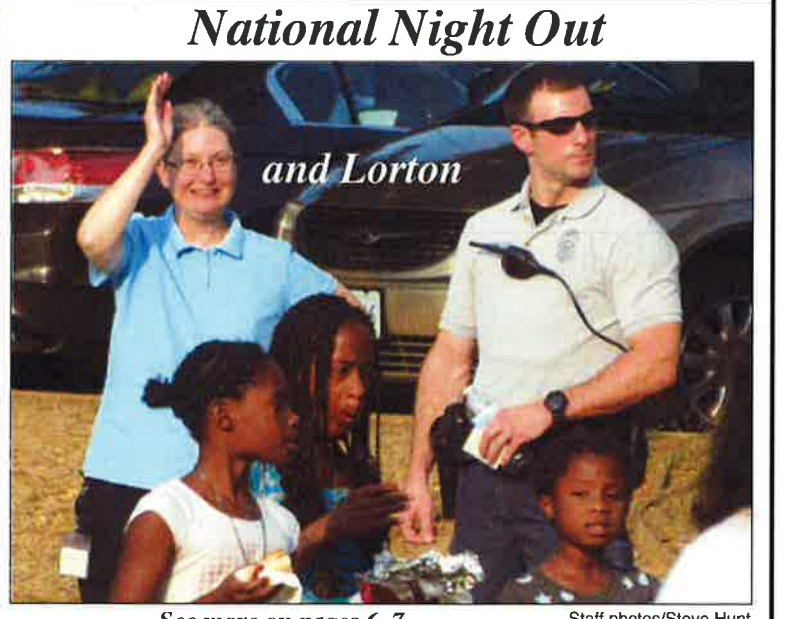
Photo courtesy Trevon Hauth

### Ziping Along

Mount Vernon Voice co-publisher Steve Hunt makes his way across a suspension bridge while taking the Salamander Tree Zip Tour in Middleburg. See story, photos page 8.



### In Bucknell



### National Night Out

and Lorton

See more on pages 6-7.

Staff photos/Steve Hunt

# Put Some Zip in Your Summer at Salamander

It's easy to channel your inner Tarzan zipping from tree to tree at the new Salamander Tree Top Zip Tour in Middleburg.

The hard part is climbing the stairs of the 40-or-so foot tower and launching yourself off on a steel cable.

But it's definitely worth it.

First of all, the zip tour is operated by a company called Empower which has extensive experience operating zip lines.

Secondly, the staff is highly qualified, first explaining the process, then hooking you up with harnesses with back-up fail-safe mechanisms, and then ensuring you understand the most important thing — how to stop as you zip from platform to platform.

On a recent Sunday, Trevon Hauth and Nate Shearer, did just that ensuring that the "zipper" was confident in his ability to brake with his leather-gloved hand without actually grabbing the cable.

Climbing the steps up to the top of the tower can be a little intimidating, and even knowing in your head that it's perfectly safe, there is still a bit of trepidation as you lift your feet to glide to the next platform where a staff member is waiting to give you the signal when to brake.

One of the more challenging aspects of the zip line is making sure you don't brake too early and thus end up not making it all the way to platform — although of course if that were to happen, you can pull yourself to the platform, or be "rescued" by a staff member.

The best thing about the zip tour is that it's not a one-time shot, such as zipping down a mountainside.

The zip tour, which spans 20 acres, features a series of five zip lines varying in length from 90 to 670 feet, as well as two suspension bridges — sort of Indiana Jones-looking, but much more secure — which you must traverse and are almost as fun as the zip lines.

Following each zip, your confidence increases until by the end of the tour, which can take up to two hours depending on the number of people participating, you feel like a pro.

The zip tours are open to the public and Empower also offers special team-building programs which they note bonds, and motivates participants.

There is no minimum age for participants, some as young as 8 have gone of the tour, but there is a minimum weight of about 70 pounds to ensure enough momentum to make it from tree to tree.

For more information, including programs, pricing and reservations, go to <http://www.salamanderresort.com/experiences/zip-tour/zip-programs>.

— Steve Hunt



Staff photos/Steve Hunt

Empower staffer Nate Shearer zips through the trees with the greatest of ease.



Photo courtesy Trevon Hauth



In photos clockwise from above, author and zip novice Steve Hunt, right, with Shearer, is all smiles after successfully completing the zip tour; Empower staffer Trevon Hauth waits as Hunt makes his way across the suspension bridge to the next platform; the tower can be a little intimidating as participants climb up to make their first zip; the cables are securely fastened to the trees.