

They paved paradise, put up a parking lot

Letter to the editor, 08.22.24, [Brunswick Beacon](#)

I used to think Joni Mitchell's "Big Yellow Taxi" was just a catchy song. I didn't know Brunswick County would be torn apart by County Commissioners who thought it was an instruction manual.

If you love Brunswick County's natural beauty and the ability to enjoy its spectacular beaches, you have watched with horror the explosion of unchecked new development: 34,005 housing units since January 2021. Brunswick County is the fastest growing county in NC and the seventh fastest in the country!

The incumbent Planning Board and County Commissioners give too much weight to developers who contribute to their campaigns and not enough to the residents they are supposed to serve.

Case in point: a July 29 meeting discussing greenspace requirements attended by Commission Chair Randy Thompson and Vice Chair Mike Forte, staff, and numerous developers. Daralyn Spivey, clerk to the commissioners, confirmed that developers were welcome but the meeting was not open to the public. Residents stood in the hallways, their requests to be included in the meeting ignored.

This is typical of the Commissioners' record of ignoring residents. Last September, dozens of residents protested construction of 2,750 single family homes and 200 townhomes in Ash. Then Commission Chair Mike Forte yelled, "Shut the hell up!" at county NAACP president Carl Parker. A Brunswick County sheriff's deputy stepped in after Forte's outburst and restored order.

Tom Simmons, one of three candidates running to replace the incumbent commissioners, said asking for the input of developers but not residents was "like giving the fox the keys to the hen house!"

If the incumbent commissioners are reelected, they'll make Joni Mitchell's warning a reality: "They took all the trees, Put 'em in a tree museum. And they charged the people a dollar and a half just to see 'em."

Vote for Tom Simmons, Jonathan Damico and Bob Fulton if you want to preserve what you love about Brunswick County.

Robert Bannerman
Supply