



AN OPEN LETTER TO THE VOTERS OF CHINCOTEAGUE

WHO IS TERRY ELLIOTT?

I have been accused of being unknown and I suppose I was-until now. Being unknown does not make me unable to do the job. I have lived on Chincoteague and worked at Wallops for 21 years in various administrative positions running multi-million dollar annual projects. I have been active in numerous volunteer organizations and I still care about the future of our Island, where I live too.

I am running because I am tired of business as usual and I am tired of the abusive political tactics of my opponent, Wanda Thornton. I CAN DO A BETTER JOB.

WHAT DO I STAND FOR?

That's easy. Clean water. Safe highways. Managed and planned growth. I want clean marine waters for our seafood industry. I want safe highways so we don't take our lives in our hands every time we leave the Island. I want thoughtful growth because we cannot simply continue to just put anything anywhere without facing a significant tax burden and depletion of our resources.

Thornton is right about one thing: I do not have all the answers. What I do have is the ability to listen and learn and to make informed decisions based upon real information.

WHAT DOES THORNTON STAND FOR?

The easy answer is "whatever is good for her." The harder answer is to wade through all the political double-talk to find out what she really wants.

The reality is that she has had 12 years to make things better for us. What has she really done? Our Causeway is no safer, (although two weeks ago, in a bit of election year vote pandering, she decided the Causeway needed shoulders). Our streets are no better, (although Deep Hole Road has been improved). She has advocated the dumping of sewage wastewater in Chincoteague Bay.

The County hires professionals to study various problems like groundwater, sewage disposal, emergency services and transportation issues. However, every time a report is submitted, Thornton argues that the consultants don't know what they are talking about and disputes the conclusions. Apparently, she is simply a lot smarter than virtually everyone else.

LETTERS REVEAL WHAT SHE REALLY THINKS OF US

In a 1998 letter to VDOT on the subject of the proposed bridge, Thornton wrote: "Most of our residents do not have a college degree... They may not be able to write a letter with a lot of adjectives and educated verbiage, but they are honest and sincere." (Letter to James Cleveland, March 13, 1998).

She goes on to say when describing letters received from Island Residents: "...there were some letters that were completely untrue and bordered on being slanderous. These comments were written by people who had a self-serving motive: GREED."

Thank you Wanda for these enlightening comments about the Residents of Chincoteague. Apparently, you think we can't write complete sentences and that WE, not you, are motivated by greed.

In a 1999 letter to an official of the Commonwealth Transportation Board, in her capacity as a Supervisor, Thornton wrote: "I am sorry our residents say untruths, misconstrue the facts and attempt to mislead the CTB. I am convinced that anyone that does not share their opinion will be on the receiving end of whatever they can sling." (Letter to Olivia Walsh, November 4, 1999).

This is the way Thornton has portrayed the Residents of Chincoteague to State officials. She obviously has no respect for us or anyone who disagrees with her. This is why you should elect me. (Both letters were made available through a Freedom of Information Act request).

WILL THE REAL WANDA THORNTON PLEASE STAND UP?

Thornton is on record as saying she favors no restrictions on development. (See her website where she makes all kind of claims). She doesn't appear to care that this will lead to groundwater drawdowns, salt water intrusion into our drinking water, depleted resources or strains on the County budget, and even less for storm runoff into our bays and creeks carrying pollutants and chemicals.

Thornton's advocacy of the Star Transit purchase in Tasley, on land that won't perc, and the Wal-Mart purchase in Onley benefited her Virginia Beach buddy, Billy Prettyman, her personal choice as Chincoteague Stakeholder. This man, a major developer, would be pleased to see the Eastern Shore paved from one end to the other if he could profit from it. He was Wanda's choice. In Thornton's eyes, no one from our Island was smart enough to qualify for the job.

Sure, she claims she wants to keep taxes down but in the meantime favors all development regardless of financial consequence to County taxpayers and says so on her website. You can't have it both ways, Wanda. You either understand basic economics or you do not.

YOU BE THE JUDGE OF HER ACTIONS

Why is our Causeway as dangerous as ever, especially since the Queen's Sound Boat Landing was built with Thornton's support? Why does she advertise 300 home sites in her campground when more than half the property is wetlands and the rest in an area of notably poor soils? Why does she flaunt our wetlands regulations by building a road through the wetlands without a permit?

Why does she maintain a maintenance facility in the wetlands that appears to be leaching petroleum products directly into the water? Why didn't her crony, Jim Frese, act as vigorously on these apparent violations as he did on an elderly man's violation on ten feet of rip rap?

IS THIS THE KIND OF REPRESENTATION YOU WANT?

We, as a County and as a District, face unique challenges in the immediate future. We need open minded, fair and honest people to represent us - not people who stand in line for direct personal benefit or who thumb their noses at existing laws and regulations.

I promise to be open-minded, fair and honest. I promise to look out for everyone's interests not just those of a few.

THE BIG DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MY OPPONENT AND ME IS THAT I RESPECT DIFFERING OPINIONS AND WELCOME THE DIALOGUE.

Thornton claims she represents people on the Island but the reality is something quite different. She represents herself and a small group of cronies. I WILL REPRESENT EVERY RESIDENT OF THE DISTRICT, EVEN MRS. THORNTON.

WHAT ARE MY VIEWS ON CLEAN WATER AND HOW ARE THEY DIFFERENT FROM THORNTON'S?

I want to protect our marine environment from the overboard discharge of treated sewage wastewater because overboard discharge reduces salinity in the water and kills fish and shellfish. Period. If we kill our shellfish, we kill our seafood industry. If we pollute our waters we kill our tourism business. This should be obvious.

Thornton is on record many times in support of overboard discharge for one big reason: she has strong relationships with developers and property owners who want to change the waterfront from small homes to high dollar projects.

This would be fine except for one small thing: they require overboard discharge of treated sewage wastewater. Without discharge there is no large scale development.

Thornton is willing to allow her friends to profit at the expense of the people she represents. This is just wrong.

WHAT ARE MY VIEWS ON OUR SEWAGE PROBLEM?

There is no doubt that we on Chincoteague have a huge problem with regard to failing septic systems and low quality soils. Whether we like it or not, an alternative MUST be found. Because we are on an island, our solutions are different and more complex than other locations. This is not my opinion. That is a fact.

We need a central sewage treatment facility on the Island. But this still requires distribution of wastewater. Deep well injection or a pipeline across to the mainland are our only real, long term solutions. Both are expensive but the facts are the facts.

Overboard discharge, just because it is less expensive, does not make it the right decision. The costs are not limited to the direct costs of sewage processing. There are also the costs to tourism and the costs to the seafood industry. There is no long term benefit from overboard discharge.

We need common sense and a thoughtful approach on the Board of Supervisors to solve these problems.

WHAT IS MY POSITION ON THE PROPOSED AQUACULTURE ENHANCEMENT ZONES?

While it is far too early to have any opinion on something that is in its preliminary phase, I will say straight up: I want clean water-now and in the future. If what DEQ is discussing leads in that direction then we need to discuss it. DEQ's initiative is several years from legislation and many things can, and will, change what it ultimately looks like. But, and this is the real question: Do we want clean water or not?

Thornton stated at the same event that she wanted this kind of thing applied selectively to individual bodies of water. (Public comment 10/17/07 at the VT Experimental Station in Painter). You can't apply this kind of thing selectively, it must be applied uniformly in order to have a chance at being successful.

Overboard discharge is a thing of the past. We cannot continue to strangle our environment, by dumping treated wastewater into our salt water estuaries, and not expect serious consequences.

Thornton does not care. She thinks sea birds are the reason fecal coliform bacteria counts are high around Chincoteague. (Public comment at Board Meeting, 2006).

Get real, Wanda. Bacteria counts are high because we have a deteriorating septic problem. We need a realistic solution and, unfortunately, it's going to be expensive because you, as our Supervisor, have ignored it for so long.

WHAT DO I THINK ABOUT THE EMS STUDY RECENTLY SUBMITTED TO THE BOARD?

Because so much has been made about this, I want everyone to understand my position clearly. I have read the EMS Study thoroughly. I strongly support our Fire Company and I have NEVER said I wanted it moved anywhere. That is a fact. Anyone who says differently is not telling the truth.

The Town of Chincoteague is not going to lose its fire equipment or ambulances. There are far too many people living on this Island for anyone to think that moving equipment away would make any sense at all.

Why does Thornton accuse me of this? It was Thornton who told the Town Council on October 1st that the County was going to take everything and move it out to Rt 13. THAT IS WHAT SHE SAID.

(See www.chincoteague-va.gov for the audio record).

You can put whatever spin you want on this. In my opinion, her actions are nothing more than politically motivated, fearmongering.

As your Supervisor, I will consider each of the 167 recommendations of the EMS Study IN THE CONTEXT OF SPECIFIC NEEDS throughout the County. I will advocate maintaining the level of fire and emergency medical services to meet our requirements here on the Island. That is a promise.

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO READ THIS

I have tried to state my position on many substantial issues facing us. I have tried to point out the differences between my opponent and me. I think those differences are very clear and that your choice is equally clear: you can send a career politician back when her last four years have been conspicuously ineffective or you can elect me, Terry Elliott, with a fresh look, an open mind and a fair and honest approach.

I am asking for your vote next Tuesday because I would like to change the way we do business here on the Island and make our government more representative of and for all of us.

THANK YOU

Elect TERRY ELLIOTT District 1 Supervisor

Paid for and authorized by Terry Elliott

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