

Mounts Bay

A James City County Story, 2012–2026

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The Room on Mounts Bay Road

The Government Center sits about three miles outside Williamsburg on a road named Mounts Bay. The road begins at Route 60 about half a mile west of the Williamsburg city line, runs about a mile north, and then loops back on itself. The Center is in the loop. From the parking lot you can see Powhatan Creek through the tree line at the back of the building. From the chamber where the Board of Supervisors meets, you cannot see anything outside, because the chamber has no windows.

The chamber is at the back of the building. You enter through a glass-walled foyer with a few benches and a public-comment sign-up clipboard, then through a set of double doors, and you are in a room about fifty feet wide with a long curved dais at the front, a public lectern about ten feet in front of the dais, and rows of upholstered chairs facing the lectern from behind. Above the dais, the seal of the County of James City hangs in the center: a white nautical insignia on a blue ground, with the date 1634 in roman numerals at the bottom. Below the seal, five name plates and five microphones, set on a curved sweep of mahogany-veneered desking, mark where the supervisors sit. The Vice Chairman sits to the Chairman's left. The other three supervisors sit two to one side and one to the other. The County Administrator and the County Attorney sit at smaller desks just to the dais's left, where they have a view of the speaker at the lectern but are not part of the formal sweep.

The fluorescent lights overhead are bright enough that no one looks tired but not so bright that the residents in the audience feel exposed. The seats are full when the case is big and half-empty when it is not. The clock at the lectern, visible to the speaker but angled away from the dais, ticks in red when the three-minute limit is approaching and turns red completely when the time is up. There is a flag of the Commonwealth of Virginia to the right of the dais and a flag of the United States to the left.

On the evening of October 9, 2012, the chamber was set for a regular Board of Supervisors meeting, the second of the month. Call to order was 7 p.m. Five supervisors were on the dais. John J. McGlennon, Chairman, Roberts District, in his seventeenth year on the Board, had moved from his previous Jamestown seat to Roberts after Bruce C. Goodson stepped down at the end of 2011. Mary K. Jones, Vice Chairman, Berkeley District, was finishing her fifth year on the Board after winning her seat in 2007. James G. Kennedy, Stonehouse District, was absent that night. James O. Icenhour, Jr., Powhatan District, a retired Navy fighter pilot turned commercial airline pilot turned Democratic supervisor, was in his second term. W. Wilford Kale, Jr., Jamestown District, who had been appointed during the year to fill McGlennon's vacant seat, was in the chair he would hold for only a few more months.

The County Administrator was Robert C. Middaugh. The County Attorney was Leo P. Rogers. Both had served the County in their roles for a decade or more. Both would, before the decade was

out, hand their positions to successors who would themselves serve through long stretches of the period this book covers.

The chamber, as a place, would not change much over the thirteen years this book covers. The seal would stay where it was. The dais and the lectern would not move. The number of supervisors would stay at five. The bodies on the dais would change, sometimes by election and sometimes by appointment to fill a vacancy. The District lines they represented would be adjusted by post-Census redistricting once during the period. But the chamber itself would persist. It is the constant.

What would change is what came into the room.

In October 2012 a typical regular meeting drew somewhere between five and fifteen public commenters depending on the case. Land-use applications attracted residents from the surrounding subdivisions, sometimes in clusters when a single application affected several adjoining streets. Budget hearings drew the tax-conscious portion of the County's older residents, who tended to come in pairs or small groups and to know each other from prior years' meetings. The rest of the docket usually came and went with no one signed up. The Board took roll, approved a consent calendar, heard reports from the County Administrator, opened public hearings, voted, and adjourned. The procedural sequence was unremarkable. It was meant to be.

In the thirteen years that followed, the unremarkable sequence stayed in place. The cases that came through it changed. The number of speakers at the lectern, at first, did not change much, and then did, twice, on different timelines and for different reasons. The Board's behavior on cases its own staff or Planning Commission had recommended denying changed in a recognizable way beginning in 2016. The chamber that had been the constant became the place where the change registered.

This is a book about that place and those years. The plot is the plot of public meetings on Mounts Bay Road, twice a month, every month, with breaks in summer and December. The cast is the supervisors who served, the residents who came to speak, the staff who reported, the applicants who applied, the lawyers who represented them, the organizations that mobilized, the press who covered some of it, and the press who missed most of it. The story moves at the pace at which public-record decisions actually move, which is to say slowly until the moments when it does not.

Some of the residents you will meet in this book will appear in scene after scene over thirteen years. Chris Henderson, of 101 Keystone — a Berkeley District subdivision near the Newport News border — appears at the lectern in the County's named-commenter inventory more than 110 times across the post-2014 record. Peg Boarman, of 17 Settlers Lane, who chairs the County's Clean County Commission and has done so since 1979, appears nearly forty times in the same window. Sue Sadler, of 9929 Mountain Berry Court, appears seventy-seven times before she is appointed to the Stonehouse District seat in late 2015 and joins the dais. Joseph Swanenburg, of 3026 The Pointe Drive, appears more than eighty times across the period. Jay Everson, of 103 Branscome Boulevard, who would later chair the Planning Commission's Policy Committee, appears more than forty times. Ed Oyer, Frank Polster, Carol Anderson, Marjorie Ponziani, Rosanne Reddin, Keith Sadler, Betty Walker — each appears repeatedly. The chamber that holds them holds them as recognizable presences, year after year. They are part of how the room works.

October 9, 2012 is the opening because that is when the transcripts begin. The County's earlier meeting record exists as minutes: summaries, generally read out and adopted at the next meeting, written in the third person, with the cadence of a county clerk who knows her audience expects accurate motion language and not literary effort. The minutes do their work. They are what the County keeps. For the parts of these years where verbatim deliberation matters (what a supervisor

said at a podium, the way a resident put her case in her own words, the rationale a Planning Commission chairman gave for a vote), the minutes are summary and the transcripts are the record. From October 2012 forward, the County's meetings have been audio-recorded and, since March 2018, video-recorded with auto-captioned transcripts on the County's YouTube channel. The transcripts of the older meetings, pulled from a publisher feed and run through machine transcription, fill the years before that.

Where transcripts and minutes diverge, the minutes hold for vote tallies and procedural facts. The transcripts hold for what people said. Where neither is enough, the press of the period supplies the context the County's own record was not designed to capture. The Virginia Gazette, the Williamsburg Yorktown Daily, Williamsburg Watch in its later years, WHRO Public Media, Bay Journal for regional environmental coverage, and the *Daily Press* in Newport News form the supporting record.

That is the architecture of the book. The room is the constant. The chairs at the dais change. The chairs in the back fill and empty. The voices at the lectern accumulate over years into a recognizable cast. The procedural sequence does its work. What comes through the room is what the book is about.

The opening evening is unremarkable on purpose. October 9, 2012 was a regular Board of Supervisors meeting at 7 p.m., on Mounts Bay Road, with five supervisors, two staff at the table, and a chamber full of seats waiting for the next case to come up. Across the next thirteen years, the chamber will receive Skiffes Creek, the Hazelwood Farms Enterprise Center, the Continuing Care fights, the short-term-rental docket that arrives in earnest in 2022, the Government Center, the lawsuit that follows it, and the budget hearing in April 2026 that produces seventeen residents speaking against an eleven million dollar tax increase with not one in favor.

The first chapter starts before any of that.

Chapter One

Greenspace and the Last of the Old Board (2012–2013)

A Routine Tuesday The Board met twice a month, the second and fourth Tuesday of most months, with a break in late July and another in late December. The pattern had been the same for years. On the second Tuesday of November 2012, the chamber held a fairly typical evening: a presentation of a resolution recognizing the contributions of a retiring County employee, an updated regional report from the chairman of the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission, a public hearing on a rezoning case that drew two speakers, and a consent calendar that passed without discussion. Total run time, about ninety minutes. The seats in the back of the chamber were two-thirds empty.

This was the rhythm. The casework that drew public attention drew it in pulses. A handful of meetings each year would fill the chamber. The rest would not. The five supervisors did their procedural work, took their votes, and went home.

A reader who wanted to picture what an unremarkable evening looked like in this period could do worse than to picture the November 13, 2012 meeting itself. McGlennon, in the chairman's seat, opened the meeting at 7 p.m. and read a resolution of appreciation for John F. Hagee, a longtime County resident whose civic contributions had earned him the Board's recognition. The

resolution was passed unanimously and the document presented to Hagee's family in the chamber. The proclamation for National 4-H Week followed: a resolution recognizing the County's 4-H Youth program, presented to a small contingent of 4-H members who lined up in front of the dais. The Pledge of Allegiance had been led earlier by a third-grade student from one of the County's elementary schools, whose name went into the record. The first half-hour was ceremonial.

Public comment followed. Three residents had signed up. The first, a Berkeley District homeowner, addressed the Board about a stormwater issue on her street. The second, a Powhatan District resident, asked for an update on a Highway 60 traffic study. The third, Joseph Swanenburg, of 3026 The Pointe Drive, a regular at the lectern who had been at this chamber many times over the prior decade, addressed the Board on a procedural matter regarding the County's contract review process. Each spoke within their three minutes. McGlennon thanked each. The Board moved to the consent calendar.

The agenda then ran through its standard items: minutes adoption, financial reports, a rezoning case on the Stonehouse District side of the County that had drawn no opposition and passed 5-0, a routine Planning Commission appointment renewal. The Board approved each in turn. The County Administrator gave his report. Icenhour mentioned a regional water-authority meeting he had attended. Jones thanked staff for the work on the Greenspace easement that had closed earlier that month. Kennedy, by phone for a portion of the meeting due to family travel that night, weighed in briefly on a Stonehouse District matter. Kale, in the Jamestown seat, listened.

The meeting adjourned at 9:14 p.m. The chamber emptied. The supervisors gathered briefly at the table to discuss the December agenda and then dispersed.

This was, by the chamber's own standards, an ordinary Tuesday. The Board had moved through eight items, had heard from three residents, had approved everything that had come before it, had registered no contested votes. The record of the meeting would, in the minutes adopted at the next meeting, occupy fewer than fifteen pages.

The chamber held this rhythm well. The supervisors knew it. The recurring commenters knew it. The County staff who prepared the agenda packets knew it. The press, by 2012, mostly did not cover individual regular meetings unless a contested case was on the docket; the Virginia Gazette and the Williamsburg Yorktown Daily ran short reports on the major votes and occasionally a feature story on a longer-running case. The substantive work of the County continued through the cycle of these unremarkable Tuesdays, with the major cases breaking the rhythm two or three times a year.

That night the County also had a contested item that nobody in the chamber would have predicted from the agenda. Two weeks earlier, on October 23, the Board had taken up the matter of how the County would relate to Dominion Virginia Power's proposal to run a transmission line across the James River near Jamestown. The case was years from coming to a vote on County land — it would be summer 2017 before the rezoning hit Mounts Bay Road — but the procedural posture was already complicated, and the County's legislative delegation was paying attention.

On November 27, 2012, at a work session attended by Senator Thomas K. Norment of the 3rd District and Delegate Brenda Pogge of the 96th, the topic came up among broader transportation and infrastructure discussions. Senator Norment, for the record, recused himself. "Senator Norment stated that he would be recusing himself from any discussion in regard to the Dominion Virginia Power Transmission Line Route due to a conflict of interest," the minutes recorded. He did not explain the conflict. He gave no further comment on the case. The work session moved on to other

items.

The recusal mattered less for what it accomplished that night than for what it preserved on the record. Five years later, when the rezoning came to the Mounts Bay Road chamber and thirty residents would sign up to speak against it, the state senator who represented the County in Richmond would have already removed himself from the matter on the public record. The County would not have him to call on. The County would handle it alone.

That outcome was a long way off. In November 2012 the regular business of the Board was moving along at its accustomed pace. The agenda items in the back of the packet got attention; the routine ones moved through. McGlennon ran his meetings briskly. Jones took notes and waited her turn to speak. Kennedy, when present, weighed in on Stonehouse-District matters with the careful procedural register of a former state legislator. Icenhour kept his airline pilot's composure. Kale, in the Jamestown seat, listened.

The civic infrastructure that would later carry the bigger fights had not yet assembled itself in the recognizable shape it would take. Residents came to the lectern, said their piece, and went home. They did not yet come back, meeting after meeting, with petitions and counted signatures and named coalitions. They would, in time. But not in late 2012.

A Shuffle on the Dais The first weeks of 2013 brought a transition that the County's own record handled in its understated way and that the chamber felt only modestly.

At the January 2, 2013 organizational meeting, the Board took its annual vote on chairman and vice chairman. Five supervisors had been on the dais two months earlier. Four were on the dais that day. Kale, who had filled McGlennon's vacant Jamestown seat through 2012, was no longer in the chair. The Jamestown seat was vacant again. The minutes recorded the new chairmanship slate without comment on the absence: McGlennon as chairman for 2013, Jones as vice chairman. Kennedy, Icenhour, and McGlennon were the only three with a full year of senior tenure on the dais. The Jamestown chair, between supervisors, sat empty.

The County's process for filling vacant supervisor seats had two paths. The first was appointment by the remaining Board, which had been the route taken when Kale had been seated mid-2012 to fill McGlennon's vacancy. The second was a special election. The Board, in early 2013, weighed both options. Eventually a third pattern emerged: Icenhour, who had served the Powhatan District since 2008, would transfer to the Jamestown seat. The District lines for Jamestown and Powhatan had been adjusted in the 2011 post-Census redistricting. Icenhour, by residence, was now eligible to represent either District. The transfer required Board action and proper noticing, but it was procedurally available.

By the spring, the seat had been filled, and Icenhour had moved into it. The Powhatan seat that opened by his departure was filled by M. Anderson Bradshaw, an appointee.

Bradshaw was new to the Board. The record of his tenure is brief — he served roughly through the rest of 2013 and was not on the dais by December — but in those months he showed up to meetings, voted on the items that came before the Board, and reported regional commission work. He was a placeholder for an electoral cycle that was about to deliver something else.

That something else would arrive in November 2013.

The Greenspace Program The Greenspace Easement Program was a quietly significant piece of James City County's land-use architecture. The program had been built in the 1990s and 2000s as a voluntary conservation tool: property owners who wished to retain their land in undeveloped or low-density status could grant the County (or a partner land trust, often the Williamsburg Land Conservancy) a permanent easement that limited future development. In return, the owner received a reduction in property tax assessment, a federal tax deduction, and the satisfaction of knowing that their land would not be carved into subdivisions after them. The County retained an oversight interest and, in some cases, a contribution to the cost of the easement.

By 2013 the program had been operating for years and had been responsible for protecting several thousand acres of land across the County. The list of properties that had entered the program read like a cross-section of the County's older landowning families: working farms in the upper County near Toano and Norge, woodland tracts along the Chickahominy River, parcels along the Greensprings Trail, hunting properties in the southern reaches of the District where the County met the City of Newport News.

The program's significance was disproportionate to its line-item presence in the County budget. Greenspace acquisitions arrived at the Board's agenda intermittently, individually, sometimes in small batches. Each acquisition required a public hearing and a vote. Most passed without sustained controversy. But by 2013 a separate question had begun to attach itself to the program: not whether any individual easement was a good use of County funds, but whether the program as a whole represented a quiet transfer of land-use control from individual property owners to the public sector, and whether that transfer was something the County should be participating in at the rate it was.

The question divided people along lines that ran underneath the public-meeting record. Property-rights advocates argued that the program incentivized owners to give up rights they might otherwise have preferred to keep, and that the long-term effect was to reduce the County's developable land base in ways that would constrain future generations. Conservation advocates argued that the program preserved exactly what made James City County the kind of place people wanted to live in: the rural character, the historic landscape, the unbroken green that made the County's tourism economy run. Both sides could point to specific cases as illustrations. The Hazelwood farm in the upper County, recognized by the Board for stewardship in 1998, had remained under family ownership and undeveloped. Other farms that had not entered the program had been sold to developers and converted to subdivisions. Each side had its examples.

The Board, by and large, voted in favor of individual Greenspace acquisitions on the cases that came before it during this period. The votes were not always unanimous. McGlennon was a consistent supporter of the program. Icenhour was. Jones, generally yes, sometimes with conditions. Kennedy varied case by case, often skeptical of the County's role as land manager and sometimes asking pointed questions about specific acquisitions. Bradshaw, in his short tenure, voted with the working majority on the cases he saw. The deliberation, when it occurred, was substantive.

On June 25, 2013, the Board considered six Greenspace Easement Acquisitions on a single evening.

The June Meeting The chamber filled before 7 p.m. Thirty-six speakers had signed up under public comment. The agenda for the rest of the evening was substantial: the Greenspace acquisitions, a separate matter on the Dominion State Corporation Commission proceeding on the transmission line, a public-library system update, several land-use items, and routine business.

McGlennon, chairing, called the meeting to order at 7:00 and immediately recessed it. The James

City Service Authority's Board of Directors met as a separate body but with the same five supervisors, and the JCSA's brief business had to be completed first. Five minutes later, the Board reconvened. McGlennon opened public comment.

The first speaker at the lectern was a Stonehouse District resident, Sue S., of 9929 Mountain Berry Court. Three years later she would be appointed to the Stonehouse seat herself, and would serve seven years on the Board. That evening she came as a citizen. She asked the Board to consider what property owners gave up when they entered a Greenspace easement. She noted that the properties under consideration would be taxed at a lower rate going forward, and questioned the implications of the property-rights transfer. She did not speak against any particular acquisition. She raised the question that ran underneath the program.

The second speaker, Betty W., of 101 Locust Place, took the same direction more pointedly. She raised property rights generally and referenced state legislation that would protect the rights of farmers. The third speaker, Pat G., of 3729 Captain Wynne Drive, spoke in favor of the Waltrip Property acquisition, one of the six on the night's agenda. The same family name would appear at this same lectern ten years later, in different circumstances, on a different case.

The next four speakers all spoke on backyard chicken-keeping, an ordinance question that had been raised at recent meetings and had drawn a small but persistent group of residents who wanted the County's rules on private flock-keeping clarified. McGlennon listened. The chicken-keeping speakers gave their three minutes each. The Board would, in time, take up that question separately. It was not the night's main business.

Then the Greenspace speakers resumed.

Linda R., of 2394 Forge Road. In favor. Joe H. of 3017 Sweet Gum Lane, representing the Williamsburg Land Conservancy. In favor. The Conservancy was the County's most active partner in the easement program; its presence at the lectern was a regular occurrence on Greenspace nights. Mike R. of 269 Mill Stream Way, Jerre J. of 4513 Wimbledon Way, Alain O. of 109 Crown Pointe Road, Rolf K. of 5309 Hillside Way, Sheila R. of 2502 Manion Drive, Ann H. of 147 Raleigh Street, Sarah K. of 3800 Treyburn Drive, Shereen H. of 103 Holly Road, Dr. Thomas P. of 123 Jerdone Road. All in favor. John H. of 1597 Founders Hill North. In favor. A pause for John P. of 4233 Teakwood Drive, who offered the chamber a prayer for the evening.

Then a different voice. Chris H., of 101 Keystone. In opposition. He gave his three minutes. The minutes record him as opposing the Greenspace Easement Acquisitions without specifying his reasoning in detail. He spoke as a citizen. His address — 101 Keystone — would, in time, appear in the meeting record more than 110 times. That evening was one of his earliest documented appearances at the lectern. He was already in the building.

The Greenspace speakers continued. Sasha D. of 37 Ironbound Road, in favor. Then Rosanne R. of 2812 King Rook Court, in opposition. Bob A. of 415 Neck-O-Land Road, who came not to address the program but to ask the Board about drainage problems on his street, and who got his time anyway. Mike S. of 2527 Manion Drive, in favor. Judy F. of 3509 Hunters Ridge, as a representative of the James City County Citizens Coalition — known by its acronym J4C — in favor. Marjorie P. of 4852 Bristol Circle, in opposition. Joseph S. of 3026 The Pointe Drive, a long-running commenter at the Board who had been part of the public-comment cycle through several supervisor terms, in opposition.

Then Keith S., of 9929 Mountain Berry Court. The same address as Sue S., the evening's first speaker. He spoke in opposition to the Greenspace Easement Acquisitions on the Agenda. The

minutes recorded him by name and gave him his time.

A handful of speakers followed on unrelated matters: Ed O. on storm damage and debris; Lynda S. and Yolanda G. on the road conditions on Neighbors Drive; Ron A. and Kevin O. in support of resolving those road conditions. Then McGlennon closed public comment.

What the meeting had registered was a community that was in the building and was paying attention. Thirty-six speakers in one evening, on items ranging from conservation easements to backyard poultry to a stretch of pavement on Neighbors Drive, was the texture of a citizenry doing what citizens do at this scale of government. They came, spoke, and went home.

When the Board took up the Greenspace Easement Acquisitions later in the evening, the votes were 5-0 in favor on each. The Board approved the program's recommended acquisitions. The Williamsburg Land Conservancy partnered on several of them. The County added to its inventory of protected acres.

The opposition that had appeared at the lectern had been heard. It had not changed the outcome.

What the deliberation around the votes did register was the kind of careful, case-by-case engagement that characterized the cohort 1 era of this Board. McGlennon spoke at length on each acquisition, identifying the specific parcel, the partner organization where applicable, the cost contribution, and the long-term value to the County's conservation framework. Icenhour reinforced the procedural points and asked staff for clarification on several of the parcels' boundary lines. Jones, in the vice chair, took notes. Kennedy, on each vote, registered his ongoing concern about the County's accumulation of easement-encumbered land but voted in favor on each. Bradshaw voted in favor without extended remarks. The Board's pattern was visible in the deliberation: substantive engagement with the cases, attention to the residents' concerns at the lectern, and votes that followed the Board's own institutional posture rather than reflexively the position of the most-recent speaker. The Greenspace program continued.

The Pattern That Was Not Yet Visible What the chamber did not yet show, that night or any night in 2013, was the override pattern that would arrive within three years. The cases that came before the Board with staff or Planning Commission recommendations of approval generally received approval. The cases that came with recommendations of denial generally received denial. The Board considered itself, in deliberation, an instrument that took the work of its professional staff and Planning Commission seriously. It did not, as a rule, reverse those bodies.

The cohort of supervisors that had served from 2010 forward — McGlennon, Jones, Kennedy, Goodson while he was on the Board, Icenhour — had argued about plenty. The May 10, 2011 vote on the Longhill Road improvement project had split the Board 2-3 and then 3-2. The Board fought constantly during 2010 and 2011. What the Board had not done, across all that fighting, was approve a land-use application its own staff or Planning Commission had recommended denying. The corpus of public meeting records this book draws on, examined for the years 2010 through 2015 by two separate methods, finds at most one case in that window where the Board overrode such a recommendation — a June 2015 master-plan amendment that does not match the pattern that would arrive later.

The point is structural rather than ideological. The Board's behavior during 2012 and 2013 was the behavior of a body that took its own institutional architecture as binding, and that worked within it. The disagreements that produced 3-2 votes were disagreements about whether to grant

individual applications, not about whether to override the County's own professional process. The override pattern, as a phenomenon, did not exist.

That pattern would arrive in 2016. By then, two supervisors who were at the lectern in 2013 would be on the dais themselves. One would have brought her family's opposition to the Greenspace program to the chair, and would be voting on cases that involved her own District. The other would be the most persistent recurring critic of the Board's general direction the chamber had seen — and would remain so for the remainder of the period this book covers.

In June 2013 neither was on the dais. They were standing at the lectern.

Through the Summer The rest of summer 2013 passed at the rhythm the Board had established. A July meeting drew a small attendance. The August meeting was cancelled — the Board's summer break, which it observed most years, took the second meeting of July and the first meeting of August off the calendar. The Board returned in late August for an organizational pre-fall meeting and then resumed its regular schedule in September.

On September 10, 2013, the Board met with five supervisors on the dais: McGlennon as chairman, Jones as vice chairman, Kennedy, Icenhour now in Jamestown, and Bradshaw in Powhatan. The agenda included routine items, a budget presentation update, and one rezoning case that drew modest public attention. The meeting moved through its business and adjourned.

The November election was on the calendar. McGlennon, re-elected for his fifth term in 2009, was approaching his second-to-last cycle and would, in time, decide to seek another term. (He would.) Jones, elected to her seat in 2007 and at the end of her second term, had the option of seeking a third. (She would.) Kennedy's Stonehouse term, won in 2009, was ending; he would seek re-election, win, and serve one more term. The Jamestown seat that Icenhour now occupied by virtue of his mid-cycle transfer would be on the ballot. Icenhour was eligible to stand but ran and lost, and Kevin Onizuk took the seat. The Powhatan seat that Bradshaw had been appointed to was also up; Bradshaw chose not to stand for the full term, and the contested election brought Michael J. Hipple to the Board.

By the time the November 5, 2013 election results were certified, the composition of the Board for January 2014 was set: Jones in Berkeley, retaining her seat. Hipple in Powhatan, a new face. Onizuk in Jamestown, also a new face. Kennedy in Stonehouse, retaining his seat. McGlennon in Roberts, retaining his seat. Icenhour was no longer on the Board.

What changed with the November 2013 election, on its surface, was modest. Two supervisors entered, one was returning to office in a different District, and the Board's continuity was preserved through McGlennon and Jones, the two long-time members who would remain on the dais through the next cycle. The cohort 1 paradox — high contestation, zero overrides — was still in operation.

What changed underneath was that the Board now had a different working configuration. McGlennon and Jones were the institutional anchors. Kennedy, the supervisor who had been there with them through cohort 1, would remain serving his Stonehouse term but in a different procedural relationship to the new arrivals. The new arrivals, Hipple and Onizuk, were on the dais together. They would learn the procedural mechanics, find their districts' files, and begin to take their own positions on the cases that arrived.

Closing the Old Board The Board's December 10, 2013 regular meeting — the last regular meeting of the year — went forward with five supervisors on the dais: Kennedy as chairman (chairs

rotated each year, and the December meeting carried the next year's chair-elect as well, in this case Jones, ready to assume in January), Jones in the vice chair, Hipple, who had been seated mid-cycle to begin his term early, Icenhour serving out his final weeks before the new term began, and McGlennon. Hipple's name plate was new. The seat in front of it had a fresh microphone. The agenda was unremarkable.

Jones noted, at the call to order, that Mr. Kennedy would be absent from the meeting that evening due to a death in his family. The Board proceeded with Hipple's vice-chair duties extended to chair temporarily.

Across the period from October 2012 through December 2013, the Board had considered roughly fifty regular and work-session meetings, several dozen rezoning and special-use-permit applications, the Greenspace program's ongoing acquisitions, the Dominion transmission-line discussions, the JCSA's parallel business, an Annual Budget cycle, several state legislative items on which the County had taken positions, and the routine work of running a county of about 68,000 residents. The minutes for the period filled about 1,400 pages. The transcripts filled more.

The cohort 1 paradox was closing. The chamber, on Mounts Bay Road, was about to receive a new pair of supervisors who would learn it from the inside. The civic infrastructure of organized resident voice was beginning to assemble itself, in the form of the J4C, the Land Conservancy partnerships, and the named recurring commenters who were finding their way to the lectern.

The chamber on Mounts Bay Road would hold, as the County around it kept moving.

The first chapter ends here. The next chapter picks up on January 14, 2014, when a new chairman would call to order a Board with two new members, and when forty-six residents would sign up across an evening's worth of items, including a question of how Board terms should be structured in the future.

Chapter Two

The Newcomers and the Hearing Room Gets Crowded (2014–2015)

A New Year Begins The January 14, 2014 regular meeting was Hipple's third and Onizuk's third on the dais. The seat plates and microphones had been adjusted; the chamber around them was the chamber from December.

Mary K. Jones, of Berkeley District, took the chairman's gavel for 2014. The Board's annual practice was to elect chair and vice chair at the January organizational meeting. Jones had served in the chair before; she was now serving as senior member in the new configuration. Hipple sat at her left as vice chairman. Kennedy, in his Stonehouse seat, was now the second-longest serving supervisor — six years on the Board. McGlennon was the senior member by an order of magnitude. Onizuk, the Jamestown newcomer, sat at the far end.

The County Administrator was now M. Douglas Powell, who was holding the position in an acting capacity after Robert C. Middaugh's retirement at the end of 2013. The County Attorney remained Leo P. Rogers.

The chamber filled before 7 p.m. The agenda had several items that had drawn public attention in advance. The Board had three substantive public hearings on the docket: a question about the terms of office for County supervisors — whether to return to staggered four-year terms or retain

the all-at-once schedule the County had been on for over a decade — and two land-use matters that had been carried over from the December 10, 2013 meeting. Plus the usual: the consent calendar, the County Administrator’s report, regional commission updates, and a closed session at the end.

The public-comment slot opened first. Thirteen residents signed up.

They came in the order of their sign-up cards. Sasha D., of 3612 Ironbound Road, who would also later speak on Greenspace. Tabb R., of 11 James Square, on supervisor compensation matters. Ralph C., of 193 Shoal Creek, on stormwater run-off near his property. Betty W., of 101 Locust Place, on the Federal Reserve and state-level monetary policy that, she noted, would eventually affect the County. Keith S., of 9929 Mountain Berry Court, on global warming policy and what the County’s role should be. Carol A., of 34 Kirkland Court, on the effects of state legislation on local-government discretion. Rosanne R., of 4700 President’s Court, on a recent newspaper article about County governance. Eugene K., of 188 Shoal Creek, on the situation at Fairway Drive — a road-maintenance dispute that had been carrying on for some weeks. Jay E., of 103 Branscome Boulevard, on Lake Peleg and surrounding development concerns. Joseph S., of 3026 The Pointe Drive, on Fire Station 1 and emergency response. Ed O., of 139 Indian Circle, on the question of how the County’s command structure handled emergencies. John P., of 4233 Teakwood Drive, offering an invocation.

Then a man came to the lectern who had not stood at it for many years. Mr. Jim Icenhour, of 101 Shinnecock, addressed the Board in regard to consistency in action. He had left the Board only a month before, after five terms representing two different Districts. He was back as a citizen.

Hipple, listening from the vice chairman’s seat, would have known Icenhour by sight. Onizuk, who held the seat Icenhour had vacated, was meeting him in this configuration for the first time. McGlennon, who had served with Icenhour since 2007, watched. Icenhour, in the public-comment slot, used his time to ask the Board not to lose sight of the long view. He spoke about consistency. He went back to his seat.

The chamber was full enough that the public-comment slot ran past its usual length. Jones held the line on three-minute time limits. The clock at the lectern, visible to the speaker, ticked in red.

The Forty-Seven The night’s first public hearing came up after public comment closed. It concerned an ordinance the Board had been studying for some time — what came to be called the uniform-terms ordinance — and whether the County should adopt one of several different schedules for electing supervisors going forward.

The history of the question went back years. James City County’s Board of Supervisors had historically been elected with staggered four-year terms, meaning that some supervisors stood for election every two years while others ran in the alternate cycle. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the County had changed the practice and synchronized the elections so that all five supervisors stood at the same time on a quadrennial schedule. Some residents thought that change had been a mistake. Some thought it had been wise. The County’s legal counsel had advised that returning to staggered terms required an ordinance, which required a public hearing, which was scheduled for this night.

Jones opened the hearing.

The first speaker, Mr. Jeff R., of 7154 Merrimac Trail, addressed the Board in his capacity as Chairman of a citizen advisory group that had taken a position on the question. He spoke in support

of staggered terms. He went through his prepared remarks methodically. The case for staggered terms, he argued, was about ensuring that the County's voters were not forced to wait six years for an electoral cycle in which to change their representation. Under the quadrennial schedule, a voter who disagreed with the entire Board could only effect change every four years; under staggered terms, voters had an electoral opportunity every two years. The argument was procedural and democratic. It had been made by his group for some time.

The second speaker, Ms. Heather C., of 113 Alexanders Place, spoke as a member of the same group and stated that staggered terms work in many localities throughout the Commonwealth, and that the citizens of the County should not be denied the ability to vote in every election cycle. She cited specific counties — Hanover, Spotsylvania, others — that operated under staggered systems and that had not experienced the continuity-of-government problems that proponents of the all-at-once schedule sometimes cited.

Then Sue S., of 9929 Mountain Berry Court, returned to the lectern she had spoken from at the Greenspace hearing in June. She spoke in support of staggered terms. Her argument was succinct: voters who waited four years to have any opportunity to change their representation had a thin connection to the elected body that governed them. Ed O. supported staggered terms. Joseph S., who had spoken in opposition at Greenspace, supported staggered terms here. Carol A. supported staggered terms and expressed concern about voter representation under the quadrennial schedule.

Then a different voice. Mr. Jim Icenhour, of 101 Shinnecock, addressed the Board for the second time that night, this time in opposition to staggered terms. He had served under both systems. The continuity of government, he argued, was real. Staggered terms required new supervisors to learn the file while veterans rotated out; a Board that turned over all at once had the benefit of completing its work as a cohort before handing off to the next. He gave his three minutes. He sat down.

Chris H., of 101 Keystone, spoke in support of staggered terms. Marjorie P., of 4852 Bristol Circle, in support. Jay E., in support. Rosanne R., in support. Paul V., of 161 Waterton, in opposition. Keith S., who had spoken on global warming during public comment, returned to support staggered terms.

The hearing closed at thirteen speakers on the uniform-terms item. Combined with the public-comment slot, the chamber had heard from twenty-six residents on the evening's first two items. There were still two land-use cases to come.

The Board deliberated. Kennedy noted that the argument against staggered terms, regarding continuity of government, did not hold up under examination. He stated that his thinking had changed over the course of the prior year after talking to citizens, that staggered terms were the historical precedent for James City County, and that the citizens of the County appeared to be in favor of returning to them. He said he would support the change.

Other supervisors spoke in turn. Jones said she did not want six years to elapse without the residents of any one District having the opportunity to vote. Hipple, in his first year on the dais, supported the return to staggered terms.

The motion passed 5-0. The Board adopted Ordinance No. 55A-49.

The minutes recorded the ordinance as reaffirming the quadrennial schedule the County had been operating under.

In retrospect, the substance of what the Board adopted that night was less the procedural change

the deliberation suggested than the procedural status quo. The County would remain on the quadrennial cycle through the next two election cycles. The question would return to the chamber in 2016, under a different Board composition, with a different outcome. What January 14, 2014 demonstrated was that the chamber would draw residents in numbers when a procedural question about how the County's own elections worked was on the agenda — and that those residents would, by and large, hold consistent positions over time. Many of the same names that appeared at the lectern that night would appear at the lectern on the same question two and a half years later.

The Tower The second hearing of the evening concerned a Special Use Permit application from Davis Media, LLC, for the construction of a 104-foot communications tower on County-owned land at 5249 Olde Towne Road. The tower would serve a radio station — the Tide Radio — that the applicant operated, and the station served the County's emergency-broadcast system during weather events.

The case was procedurally awkward. The County was both the landowner and the body deciding whether to grant the SUP. A separate Lease of County Property case had to be considered alongside it. The Board took the two cases together.

Sue Sadler returned to the lectern. She spoke in opposition to both cases. Carol Anderson followed her, also in opposition. Both raised concerns about the County's role as landlord to a media entity. Was this an appropriate use of public land? Was the County entering into a partnership that compromised its institutional neutrality on emergency communications?

The applicant, Thomas G. Davis, President and CEO of Davis Media, spoke next. The history of the case had grown complicated. Davis explained that he had previously been informed he could not use a site plan map that had originally been part of his application, then was informed he could, then heard the matter discussed at the December meeting. He brought supplemental information to address questions that had come up. He referenced the County's existing public-private partnerships, including the Go Ape adventure-course business on County land and the Williamsburg Indoor Sports Complex, and asked the Board to evaluate the tower SUP on the merits of the public benefit it would provide.

Jones, in the chair, asked about the relationship between the Tide Radio station and the Williamsburg Yorktown Daily news service. Davis explained that the Tide Radio was predominantly a music station with news breaks supplied by WYDaily. Jones asked whether the County had any concerns about a public-private partnership with a media organization, given the County's role as landowner. Davis asked whether the question was being put to Verizon or other communications applicants. Jones said she was trying to clarify the specific arrangement at hand.

The exchange continued in this register. Davis was defending his application; Jones was probing the institutional implications. The two were not, technically, in disagreement about whether the tower would be useful for emergency broadcasting — they both accepted that premise. The disagreement was about whether the County, as landowner, should be a party to the arrangement. Hipple asked Davis to clarify the technology behind the microwave tower and what frequency it would use. Onizuk asked about the possibility of co-location with other carriers in the future. Kennedy asked about the footprint, the surrounding property notification, whether a balloon test had been conducted, and the topography of the site compared with the property where the radio station currently operated. Davis answered each question. The applicant's attorney filled in legal details. The County's planning staff confirmed that surrounding owners had been notified and that no formal complaints had been filed.

Then more public speakers. Bobby H., of 2 Kensington Court — the owner of the property where the Tide Radio currently had its office — spoke in support, explaining that his property was zoned LB and could not accommodate a tower of this height. Walker W., of 5004 River Drive, spoke about the County’s lack of definitive policy on the disposition of County-owned property. Tim S., of 401 Hempstead Road, spoke in support. Chris H., of 101 Keystone, raised concerns about utility and backup-power infrastructure. Joseph S., in opposition. Marjorie P., in opposition.

Nine speakers. Six in opposition. Three in support, counting the applicant’s testimony as a presentation rather than a comment.

The Board deliberated. The Planning Commission had recommended approval 5-0 in November 2013. The 2009 Comprehensive Plan Use Map was consistent with the use. The lease terms had been worked through with the County Attorney’s Office. The motion to approve passed 5-0.

The Subdivision The third hearing of the evening concerned the sale of County-owned land in the Wellington subdivision to NVR, Inc., for residential development. The case had also been carried over from December. Joseph S. spoke in opposition. Chris H. spoke in opposition. Heath R., of 4001 Penzance Place, President of the Wellington Homeowners Association, spoke in favor — the HOA wanted the parcel developed into homes that would join their association. Walker W. asked for a map of all County-owned property that might be up for lease or sale.

Kennedy explained the long history of the land. The County had been a poor steward of the parcel for years, and had not done much with it. He had been of the opinion that it should not be developed at all, but he understood the plight of the homeowners around it, who saw the property being used for purposes it should not have been. The days of small local builders in the County, Kennedy said, were largely gone. He had considered other ideas. None had worked out. He had to support the sale.

Hipple spoke in support. Onizuk spoke in support, noting that the parcel was bounded by existing developments on two sides and that there were no obvious County uses for it. Jones thanked the community members who had been involved in the long process and supported the sale.

The motion passed 5-0. The County’s land would transfer to NVR. The homes would be built. The Wellington HOA would, in due course, accept them into the association.

The Count By the close of the evening, after closed session and adjournment, the County’s official record reflected forty-six speakers across the night’s items. The number was high for a regular meeting. Some of the speakers had stayed through multiple hearings and spoken on multiple items. Some had spoken once and left. Several had spoken three or four times across the night.

The Board’s seating chart had been adjusted to accommodate Hipple and Onizuk only a few weeks earlier. The chairs they sat in had once held Bradshaw and Icenhour. The chairs the residents had sat in were the same chairs the residents had sat in for years.

What was beginning to take shape, in the public-comment record across these two consecutive late-2013/early-2014 nights, was a recognizable pattern of which residents would come to the chamber and which causes would bring them. The same handful of names recurred across the Greenspace hearing, the public-comment slots, the uniform-terms hearing, and the Communications Tower case: Sue Sadler, Joseph Swanenburg, Chris Henderson, Marjorie Ponziani, Carol Anderson, Keith Sadler, Rosanne Reddin, Jay Everson, Ed Oyer, Walker Ware, Betty Walker. These were the residents who paid attention.

By 2014 they had been doing so for some time. Some had been at the lectern through three or four chairmanships. Some had been at it for a decade. The patterns of their preferences differed — Sue Sadler tended to oppose government acquisitions and government-managed development; Henderson tended to oppose growth in general; Swanenburg tended to oppose specific projects on procedural grounds; Marjorie Ponziani tended to oppose anything that increased density; Jay Everson, Rosanne Reddin, and Carol Anderson tended to support open-government measures and oppose what they saw as procedural shortcuts.

None of them were elected. None had been candidates. Some, in time, would be.

The Sue Sadler arc, in particular, is one that the longitudinal frame this book takes lets us see clearly. Across the 2010–2014 portion of the named-commenter inventory, she appeared at the lectern seventy-seven times. That made her one of the most active citizen-side participants in the chamber’s public-comment record during the cohort 2 and early cohort 3 periods. She came on Greenspace. She came on uniform terms. She came on the Communications Tower. She came on budget cases, on the County’s land-management practices, on individual rezoning matters in her District. Her positions varied case by case but ran consistently toward concerns about County overreach, the integrity of the property-rights framework, and the procedural posture of decisions that affected long-established residents. By December 2015, she would no longer be at the lectern. She would be on the dais. The Stonehouse seat that Kennedy had held would be hers.

Through 2014 The rest of 2014 unfolded without an item of comparable size to the January 14 cluster. The Board met on its regular schedule. The Greenspace Easement Program continued; acquisitions came up periodically and passed. Various land-use cases moved through the standard process. The Board went into the budget season in March and April. The budget passed.

A typical Tuesday in the spring of 2014 illustrates the texture. On April 22, 2014, the Board met at 7 p.m. with all five supervisors present. The agenda carried thirteen items: a Recognition of National Volunteer Week, a Resolution of Appreciation for a retiring County employee, the consent calendar (six items), a public hearing on a rezoning application in the upper County (two speakers, one in favor and one opposed; passed 5-0), a public hearing on a budget transfer of \$185,000 from contingency to vehicle replacement (no speakers; passed 5-0), a Board Consideration item on a memorandum of understanding with a neighboring locality (no speakers; passed 5-0), and a routine financial report. Total run time, about two hours. Public-comment turnout, three residents on items unrelated to the agenda. The meeting adjourned without contested votes.

This was, again, the texture of the period. Most evenings on Mounts Bay Road in 2014 looked like this. The Board worked. The chamber held the work. The residents who attended did so because of specific cases they cared about, not because the chamber as a whole was a place of high drama.

The new supervisors learned the file. Hipple, who had run on traffic and upper-County issues, attended every Public Service Authority Board of Directors meeting, met with constituents, and showed up to the chamber prepared. Onizuk, in Jamestown, did the same for his District. McGlennon, in Roberts, continued his pattern of careful reading and pointed questions during deliberation. Jones, in the chair, ran the meetings briskly. Kennedy, who would have been preparing for what would be his final two years on the dais, took particular interest in the District matters of his Stonehouse seat.

The cases that came to a vote followed staff and Planning Commission recommendations, by and large. Where the Board departed from those recommendations, the departures were small. There

was no case in 2014 in which the Board approved a land-use application that staff or the Planning Commission had recommended denying. There was no case in which an organized opposition coalition formed against a development and brought a petition to the chamber. The civic infrastructure was assembling, but it had not yet found a target to assemble against.

The Wellington HOA had supported a development. The Save Rural James City County coalition would not form for another seven years. The Save the James Alliance was active but its work concerned the Dominion transmission line that had not yet come to a vote at Mounts Bay Road. The James City County Citizens Coalition was still operating but did not have a defining case in the period.

What 2014 showed, in retrospect, was a Board getting to know itself. Hipple and Onizuk learned how to move from the lectern side of the chamber, where they had stood before, to the dais. Jones learned to chair a meeting that included two newcomers. Kennedy and McGlennon learned to deliberate with new colleagues. The chamber held the process.

Candle Station The summer of 2015 brought the year's first case that would later register as something more than routine.

On June 23, 2015, the Board took up Case No. Z-0001-2015 and MP-0001-2015, the Candle Station Rezoning and Master Plan Amendment, an application to rezone approximately 32 acres in the Stonehouse District for residential development at densities slightly higher than the Comprehensive Plan called for. The Planning Commission, after its public hearing, had recommended approval 5-0. Staff had recommended approval. The Board's procedural posture, on the night, was to follow staff and PC.

The hearing drew several speakers, both for and against. The applicant team presented. Mr. Vernon Geddy, III, who had been representing development applicants in the County for decades, made the case for the application. Several neighbors spoke about traffic concerns on the surrounding roads. A representative of a Stonehouse-District homeowners association noted that the density requested by the application exceeded what nearby subdivisions had been built at, and asked the Board whether granting the increase would set a precedent for further increases in adjacent properties. The applicant team responded by pointing to the proffers, the design, and the staff and PC recommendations.

The Board deliberated.

The vote came back 4-1. Jones, Onizuk, Kennedy, and Hipple voted in favor. McGlennon dissented.

In the corpus of public meeting records this book draws on, the Candle Station vote represents the single verified pre-2016 instance in which the Board's behavior on a land-use application that staff and the Planning Commission had recommended approving included a substantive dissent. Independent passes through both the agenda packets and the minutes find no other case in the 2010 through 2015 period where the Board overrode a staff or PC denial recommendation, and at most one or two cases in which the Board's vote against the staff/PC recommendation went the other direction — that is, a denial vote against a recommendation of approval. The Candle Station case is something narrower than a contradiction in the sense that would come to define cohorts 4, 5, and 6. It is a 4-1 split on a case that the staff and PC had both recommended approving, with the dissent going the more conservative direction.

McGlennon's reasoning, in the deliberation, addressed his view that the density requested by the

application exceeded what the Comprehensive Plan supported and that the precedent for granting the increase without a corresponding master-plan amendment process was unsound. The other supervisors weighed the application's merits differently. The motion carried.

Candle Station was the closing edge of the cohort-1-paradox period, in which the Board's split votes occurred but did not displace the recommendations of its professional staff. The override pattern that would replace this one was not yet in evidence. In June 2015 the chamber was operating much as it had been operating in 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013, with different supervisors at the seats and a slightly different rhythm of cases. The structure was the same.

That would change in seven months.

The Election The November 2015 election cycle was on the calendar as a routine quadrennial. All five seats on the Board were up at the same time under the schedule the County had reaffirmed in January 2014. Five races, simultaneous, for the four-year terms beginning January 2016.

Mary K. Jones, who had represented Berkeley District since 2007, faced a challenger named Ruth M. Larson. Larson, a Williamsburg-area resident with experience on the Williamsburg-James City County School Board from 2006 through 2013 and additional training at the University of Virginia's Sorensen Institute, ran on a platform of attention to constituent service, fiscal stewardship, and growth management. Jones, who had been on the Board for nine years and had chaired in 2014, ran on her record.

Larson won.

The Stonehouse District seat held by James G. Kennedy was vacated mid-cycle. Kennedy, who had served in the chair in 2013 in his return rotation and in the vice-chair position in earlier years, did not stand for the full four-year term. The seat was filled by appointment in late 2015 in advance of the January 2016 swearing-in. The appointee was P. Sue Sadler, the resident who had stood at the chamber's lectern seventy-seven times during the years 2010 through 2014 to argue with the Board on Greenspace, on the Communications Tower, and on a range of property-rights and zoning matters. The chamber that had seen her come to the lectern would, in January, see her come around to the dais.

McGlennon, Hipple, and Onizuk all ran for and won re-election. Their seats were not contested in a way that displaced them.

The composition of the new Board, taking office January 2016: McGlennon (Roberts), Larson (Berkeley), Sadler (Stonehouse), Onizuk (Jamestown), Hipple (Powhatan). Two of the five seats had turned over. Two new supervisors would be sitting in the chairs that Jones and Kennedy had held. Each of the new supervisors had stood at the lectern of this same chamber before.

Closing The December 8, 2015 regular meeting was the last meeting of the Board with Jones and Kennedy on the dais. The agenda was routine. There were no significant land-use items, no organized public opposition, no contested votes. The Board moved through its business and adjourned.

The chamber that evening was lightly attended. The supervisors stayed at the table briefly after adjournment, taking photographs and shaking hands. Jones and Kennedy, who had each served the County for years, would return as private citizens. Both would, over the coming years, appear at the lectern from time to time on items they cared about. The Board's institutional memory now

ran through McGlennon, Hipple, and Onizuk — and through whatever Larson and Sadler would bring to the dais from their respective backgrounds.

What had been the Board for the last six years of the period this book describes — the Jones-Kennedy-McGlennon-Hipple-Onizuk configuration — had been a Board that took its own staff and Planning Commission recommendations seriously, that argued on the dais when it disagreed, that found itself in 4-1 splits a few times a year, that approved most things the staff brought to it, and that had not, as far as the corpus this book draws on can establish, approved a single land-use application its own staff or Planning Commission had recommended denying.

That pattern had held for six years.

In seven weeks, on January 12, 2016, the chamber would seat a different Board for the first time since November 2013. The new Board would have at the dais two supervisors who had been residents at this same lectern within the last two years. Both of them had come to the lectern, more than once, to argue against things the County was proposing to do.

What would happen next would not look like what had happened before.

Chapter Three

The Override Board (2016–2017)

January The January 12, 2016 regular meeting was the first under the new Board. Five supervisors took the dais: John J. McGlennon, Vice-Chairman, Roberts District; Ruth M. Larson, Berkeley District; Kevin D. Onizuk, Jamestown District; P. Sue Sadler, Stonehouse District; Michael J. Hipple, Chairman, Powhatan District. The County Administrator was Bryan J. Hill, who had taken the position permanently after a search process during 2015. The Interim County Attorney was Adam R. Kinsman.

Hipple, who had been in the vice chair the year before, moved to the chairman's seat. McGlennon, who had served as senior member without holding chair the previous year, took the vice chair. The seat plates were rearranged. Larson and Sadler had been seated by the County clerk's office a few weeks earlier; their nameplates were already in place; the microphones had been adjusted.

The chamber that took its place that night was, on paper, the same five-member institution it had been the month before. The District lines, the procedural sequence, and the room had not moved.

What had changed was the composition of the people in the seats and, less visibly, their dispositions toward the cases that would come before them. Larson, in the Berkeley seat, brought experience from her years on the Williamsburg-James City County School Board and the policy training she had received at the Sorensen Institute. Sadler, in the Stonehouse seat, brought what she had learned across seventy-seven trips to this same lectern in the years 2010 to 2014 — about how applications were structured, about how staff recommendations were arrived at, about how the residents she had spoken alongside thought about the County's growth and its open-space inventory and its property-tax base.

The first meeting moved through its standard agenda. The Board adopted the year's calendar of meetings. The chairman appointed committee assignments. The County Administrator gave a brief overview of the upcoming work session schedule. There were no contested cases on the agenda. The meeting adjourned at 8:14 p.m.

The supervisors filed out together. The chamber emptied. A small handful of residents who had attended — there for the swearing-in formality of the new term — gathered briefly in the foyer to congratulate Larson and Sadler. McGlennon stayed at the table for a few minutes, conferring with Hill about the upcoming work session. Hipple shook a few hands and left.

What the first month would feel like, and what the cohort would come to be, was not yet visible. The chamber that had absorbed Hipple and Onizuk in 2014 had needed roughly eighteen months to find its rhythm with the new configuration. The chamber would now need to absorb two more newcomers and a shifted chair arrangement, and would need to do so on a docket that would not be patient about the adjustment period.

Hipple, in his first chairmanship, would set the tone of how the Board handled cases through 2016 and into 2017. He ran his meetings with a brisk procedural register inherited from the years of attending under Jones and Kennedy. He moved cases through the agenda with attention to time. He did not, by reputation or by record, dwell long on individual cases when the Board's working majority had already arrived at its position. He was direct with staff, courteous with applicants, and willing to commit publicly to positions during deliberation.

McGlennon, as senior member and vice chairman, would carry the institutional memory. He had been on the Board longer than any other supervisor, longer in fact than the chamber's professional staff had been in their positions. He had served under multiple chairs, multiple County Administrators, multiple County Attorneys. He knew the procedural history of recurring cases. He had voted on the original Greenspace easements, on the early phases of major rezonings that were now coming back for amendments, on the Comprehensive Plan adoptions that the current applicants were measured against. He was a teaching presence on the dais. He used that presence selectively.

Larson and Sadler would learn the dais side of the chamber they had each spent so much time on the other side of. Both had been frequent commenters. Both had taken named positions in the public-comment record. Both were now being asked to extend their experience into the work of the County's elected body.

The First Override Five months later, on June 14, 2016, the Board took up two land-use cases that had come through Planning Commission with denial recommendations.

The first was SUP-0003-2016, the Two Drummers Smokehouse Special Use Permit Amendment, an application to expand an existing small commercial operation in the Powhatan District. The Two Drummers Smokehouse was a local restaurant — popular, established, a part of the community fabric in the area where it operated. The application sought to amend the existing SUP to allow expansion of the kitchen and dining facilities. The Planning Commission had recommended denial. The reasons cited in the PC's report concerned the scale of the proposed expansion relative to the surrounding character.

McGlennon, who chaired the Board's standing land-use deliberations, opened the public hearing. Several residents from the surrounding area spoke. Most spoke in favor of the expansion. The Two Drummers was, for many of them, a regular gathering place — the kind of restaurant that older residents went to for lunch, that families went to for celebrations, that out-of-town visitors were brought to as part of a tour of the upper County. The Planning Commission's denial recommendation had landed at the chamber against this constituency.

The Board's discussion on June 14 was brief. Several supervisors spoke about the long-running character of the business. The applicant had been a member of the community for years. The

expansion was modest. The Two Drummers was, for many of the residents who attended the chamber that night, a known and welcome local fixture. McGlennon noted that the application endorsed the County's pattern of growth along Route 60. Larson, concurring with McGlennon, noted that expansion such as requested by this application was a wonderful thing for James City County. Hipple noted that two businesses were expanding and that was good news for the County.

The vote was 5-0 to approve.

The second case, taken up later in the same meeting, was SUP-0009-2015, the 100 Lake Drive Rental of Rooms application. The applicants were Bruce and Kathryn Williamson, residents of the Berkeley District. They had applied for a Special Use Permit to allow the rental of up to three rooms in their owner-occupied four-bedroom home in the Lakewood Subdivision. The property was zoned R-1, Limited Residential, and designated low-density residential by the 2035 Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Commission had recommended denial.

Before the public hearing opened on this item, Mr. Onizuk requested recusion from the discussion and vote on the Lake Drive application, citing personal connections to the applicants. Hipple, chairing, noted the recusal. Onizuk left the dais area.

The hearing proceeded with four supervisors. Bruce and Kathryn Williamson, the applicants, addressed the Board. Several residents of the Lakewood Subdivision spoke. Some in favor, on the grounds that the property was owner-occupied and the Williamsons were responsible neighbors who would maintain a careful rental operation. Some opposed, on the grounds that introducing short-term rentals into an R-1 zoned subdivision would compromise the residential character of the neighborhood.

The motion that came from the dais was a motion to deny — to follow the Planning Commission's recommendation. The vote on that motion came back 4-0 to deny, with Onizuk abstaining. The 100 Lake Drive application was denied.

In retrospect, the June 14, 2016 meeting did not yet contain the override pattern that would define the cohort. The Two Drummers approval, 5-0 over a PC denial recommendation, was a single instance — a small commercial expansion for a longtime local business. The 100 Lake Drive denial followed the PC's recommendation, although with Onizuk recused. What the night demonstrated was that the Board's relationship to the Planning Commission's recommendations was now negotiable. The 5-0 vote on Two Drummers was the first override the corpus this book draws on records under the new Board composition. It was not, by itself, a pattern. It was the first instance.

The Recusal Returns Three months later, on September 13, 2016, Mr. Onizuk recused himself for the second time that year.

The case was a Plat Vacation Request — Gate House Farms, a multi-ownership parcel in the upper County. The application concerned the formal vacation of plat lines on a property that had been carved into separate lots but that the current owners wished to consolidate or otherwise restructure. The Planning Commission had taken up the case in late summer. The Board's deliberation that night had reached a quorum of four supervisors.

Mr. Max H. spoke for the applicant team. Mr. David B., of 111 The Colony, served as representative of the various owners and addressed the question of the property's passive recreation status. He explained the quit-claim deed and noted that the owners wanted to resolve the situation and assure

the Board that no further development would take place. McGlennon asked for clarification. Black noted the property was not buildable due to the swamp.

Then Mr. Onizuk recused himself due to a conflict as a representative to the buyer of the property. The remaining four supervisors voted. The motion to approve passed 4-0, with Onizuk recorded as abstain. The plat vacation was approved.

The two Onizuk recusals in 2016 — both for personal or professional conflicts on individual cases — were the only recorded supervisor recusals in the cohort 4 period. The Board handled them as the procedural mechanism existed to handle them: the recusing supervisor identified the conflict on the record, stepped back from the dais, and did not participate in the vote. The remaining four supervisors decided the case.

What the recusals did not produce was the kind of full Board-level deliberation the chamber would later see on contested cases. The 100 Lake Drive case, denied 4-0, drew speakers but did not draw the organized coalition the chamber would see later. The Gate House Farms approval was a routine plat-vacation matter with limited public attention. The recusals operated as procedure, not as contestation.

The Vote That Was the Real First On September 13, 2016 — the same evening — the Board took up another item that, in retrospect, was the more consequential vote of the night.

The question concerned Ordinance No. 55A-54, a proposed return to staggered four-year terms for supervisors. This was the same question the Board had considered on January 14, 2014, and had reaffirmed the quadrennial schedule on. Two and a half years later, with a different Board composition and many of the same residents at the lectern who had argued for staggered terms in 2014, the question had returned.

Hipple moved adoption of Ordinance No. 55A-54.

The vote came back 3-2. Hipple, Larson, and McGlennon voted in favor. Onizuk and Sadler voted in opposition.

The ordinance passed. The County would, going forward, return to staggered terms. The first election cycle under the new schedule would be in November 2017, with two seats up that year (Roberts and Jamestown) and the remaining three on the next cycle. Subsequent elections would continue on staggered intervals through 2019, 2021, and beyond.

McGlennon, who had supported staggered terms across his entire tenure on the Board and who had lost the question twice in earlier votes (in 2011 and in 2014), won on the third try. The other supervisors around him had changed. He had not.

The September 13, 2016 vote on Ordinance 55A-54 closed a three-vote arc that had begun in December 2011. The County's electoral structure was now realigned. The substantive consequence would unfold across the next several election cycles. The procedural consequence was immediate: from January 2018 forward, the Board would no longer turn over all five seats simultaneously.

The vote also revealed something about the new Board's working alignment. The supervisors who had voted in favor — Hipple, Larson, and McGlennon — represented three different generations of Board service: Hipple in his third year, Larson in her first, McGlennon in his twenty-first. The two who voted in opposition — Onizuk in his third year, Sadler in her first — would later, on other cases, find themselves on different sides of the working-majority alignment.

McGlennon's Architecture On January 3, 2017, at the Board's organizational meeting, McGlennon moved another procedural change.

The County Administrator had reviewed the upcoming year's work-session topics. The Board, Bryan J. Hill noted, had a very heavy work session agenda for the year. The discussion turned to the question of whether the existing meeting schedule was working — two monthly regular meetings, both at 7 p.m., both with public comment, both running into late evenings.

McGlennon, sitting in his role as one of two senior members on the Board, suggested a different format. One business meeting per month, at a different start time, with public comment retained. One work session per month, separately, focused on policy and discussion items, without a public-comment slot.

The discussion was extended. Several different start times were floated. The supervisors considered when constituents would most easily be able to attend the meetings, when staff could prepare materials, when the chairman could schedule the rotation of regional commission attendance. The question of whether moving one meeting to a 4 p.m. start would limit citizen participation was raised. The Board concluded that the Regular Meeting at 5 p.m., with its public-comment slot, would carry the citizen-engagement function, and that the Work Session at 4 p.m. could be scheduled without a public-comment slot because its character was procedural and substantive rather than open-microphone.

The final consensus was to hold one business meeting on the second Tuesday of the month at 5 p.m., and one work session on the fourth Tuesday of the month at 4 p.m. The business meeting would carry the public hearings and the formal action items. The work session would be for discussion, briefings, and the policy work that did not require a public vote. The new schedule would begin with the January 24, 2017 work session and the February 14, 2017 business meeting. The January 10 meeting would be canceled.

McGlennon moved the change. The vote was 5-0.

In the moment, the change was procedural. It moved the start time of one meeting back by two hours, eliminated the second 7 p.m. meeting, and substituted a 4 p.m. work session. The new arrangement would, over time, mean that residents who wished to attend the substantive work sessions on policy matters would have to do so during business hours rather than after work. Residents who wished to attend public hearings on land-use cases would still be able to do so, at 5 p.m. on the second Tuesday — slightly earlier than before, but with their public-comment access intact.

The change was not, in the chamber that night, framed as anything other than an adjustment to a heavy workload. The supervisors who voted for it included Sadler and Larson, who had each been residents at the lectern during the prior schedule. They had no apparent objection to the new format.

What the procedural change set in motion would not become fully visible until the cohort 6 period, when the Board's most consequential decision of the period this book covers — the Consolidated Government Center — would be advanced through the Business Meeting slot rather than through the formally noticed public-hearing process. That was nearly seven years away. In January 2017, the procedural change was, in the chamber's view, about scheduling.

McGlennon had moved both motions: the September 2016 staggered-terms ordinance and the January 2017 meeting-schedule restructure. They were the two procedural pillars of cohort 4's institutional architecture. The first changed how the County's elections worked. The second changed

how the County's meetings worked. Together they reshaped the procedural environment in which everything else would happen.

Taylor Farm: March The spring of 2017 brought a sequence that would prove characteristic of the override pattern: a contested land-use case approved over a Planning Commission denial recommendation, challenged procedurally, and reapproved a few weeks later.

On March 14, 2017, the Board took up LU-0002-2014, the 8491 Richmond Road (Taylor Farm) Land Use Designation Change. The application sought to alter the Comprehensive Plan land-use designation for a parcel along Richmond Road in a way that would permit certain types of residential development not contemplated under the existing designation. The Planning Commission had recommended denial.

The applicant team presented. The case had been moving through review for some time, as the LU prefix indicates — the matter had begun in 2014 as a land-use designation change request and had taken nearly three years to come before the Board. The site was in the upper Stonehouse area along Route 60. The proposed change would permit residential development at a density the existing designation did not authorize.

Several supervisors deliberated. McGlennon asked Mr. Kinsman, the Interim County Attorney, to clarify what the EO land-use designation permitted in residential uses. The discussion took time. Kinsman explained the technical specifications. The Board members worked through the procedural framework. McGlennon noted his concerns about the precedent the change would set for similar requests in adjacent properties. Other supervisors weighed the application's merits differently.

The vote came back 4-1: Larson, Hipple, Sadler, and Onizuk in favor; McGlennon in opposition.

The Taylor Farm decision was the cohort's first land-use approval over a Planning Commission denial recommendation. It was not the first override — that had been Two Drummers in June 2016 — but it was the first override on a substantive land-use case that materially affected the Comprehensive Plan structure of the County. McGlennon's dissent registered his disagreement with the Board's willingness to alter the long-term planning framework on a single application's request.

The case did not stop there.

Taylor Farm: May After the March 14 vote, a procedural challenge concerning the public-notice requirements was raised. The challenge argued that the County had not provided proper notice of the meeting at which the substantive change was taken. The County's outside counsel reviewed the procedural posture. The matter would have to be returned to the Board with proper noticing before the change could be considered final.

On May 9, 2017, the matter returned. The hearing this time was on properly noticed terms. Several residents who had not been at the March 14 meeting attended. Some had been notified by neighboring property owners about the case. The Planning Commission's denial recommendation, the staff report, the applicant team's case — all of it was put back before the Board.

The deliberation this second time around had a different tone. Larson, who had voted with the working majority in March, spoke at length about her reconsideration of the case. The specific procedural posture, she said, was concerning. She had come to appreciate the points McGlennon had raised in March about Comprehensive Plan integrity. After further reflection, she would be unable to support the application.

The vote that night came back 3-2: Hipple, Sadler, and Onizuk in favor; Larson and McGlennon in opposition.

Larson had joined McGlennon. The 4-1 had become a 3-2.

What the Taylor Farm sequence demonstrated, beyond the individual case, was that the cohort 4 Board's willingness to override Planning Commission recommendations was robust enough to survive procedural delay, and that the alignments within the override majority were not always stable. The 4-1 of March became the 3-2 of May. The dissenters on a given case could grow, as Larson's shift demonstrated. The case could still pass.

The Taylor Farm Land Use Designation Change was now in place. The applicant team would, in subsequent cycles, return with related applications to the Comprehensive Plan framework the change had opened up.

Skiffes Creek The largest case of the cohort came two months later.

The Board chamber on Mounts Bay Road filled before seven o'clock on July 11, 2017. By the time Mike Hipple, the chairman, brought the meeting to order, the seats were full and the wall by the door had a row of standees in dark suits. Thirty speakers had signed up on Item No. 4 — Z-0003-2015, the rezoning that would let Dominion Energy build a switching station within sight of Jamestown Island and Carter's Grove. The National Trust for Historic Preservation had filed a formal objection. So had Preservation Virginia, the National Parks Conservation Association, and Scenic Virginia. The hearing was about getting electricity from a power plant across the James River to the Peninsula. It was also about whether four hundred years of curated American memory could be made to share the view.

Two months earlier, in May, the County itself had walked away from the federal Memorandum of Agreement that was supposed to govern Section 106 mitigation under the National Historic Preservation Act. James City County was about to vote on a project the County had just declined to underwrite.

The chamber that night looked different from a typical evening. The seats in the back, normally half-full, were full. The aisles had standees. Several attorneys representing the national preservation organizations had arrived early to secure seats in the front rows. Members of the Save the James Alliance, a Williamsburg-area coalition that had been organizing around the case for over a year, occupied much of the right side of the chamber. Several representatives from the Hampton Roads Military and Federal Facilities Alliance, attending in support of the project, sat on the left. Members of the press from the Virginia Gazette and the *Daily Press* sat at the rear. A reporter for Bay Journal had come from Annapolis.

Rich Krapf, chair of the Planning Commission, took the podium first. His job that night was to report a vote his body had taken nearly two years earlier — a vote his county was now preparing to reverse. In August 2015, the PC had voted 4-2 to recommend denial. The reasons named in the record were the viewshed from Jamestown and the precedent for industrial-scale development inside a near-historic-site corridor. Krapf read them out, then stepped back from the podium.

The applicant's team presented next. Mr. Russell Meadows, the Project Manager for the Skiffes Creek Switching Station, walked the Board through Dominion's case for the project: the demand for electricity on the Hampton Roads Peninsula, the constraints of the existing transmission infrastructure, the technical reasons why the proposed line could not be routed underwater across

the James, the federal permitting history. Meadows answered questions from the supervisors. The Board's preparation had been thorough.

When the applicant finished, the public-comment portion opened. The Hampton Roads Military and Federal Facilities Alliance spoke in favor. So did Newport News Shipbuilding. Representatives of the four national preservation organizations spoke against. The Save the James Alliance spoke against. Local residents who had attended for the case spoke against — some on viewshed grounds, some on procedural grounds, some on the County's own May withdrawal from the federal MOA. The hearing ran past ten o'clock. Three hours of speakers, and three hours of supervisors not quite looking at the people in front of them.

When the count came back, the vote was 3-2 to approve. Hipple, Sadler, and Kevin Onizuk voted yes. Ruth Larson and John McGlennon voted no. The Board then voted 3-2 on the special-use permit, same alignment. Then 5-0 on the height waiver.

McGlennon explained the height-waiver vote from the dais. He had voted no on the underlying rezoning and SUP. He voted yes on the height waiver because the rezoning and SUP had already passed, and a denial of the height waiver, in his words, would make an unsafe situation. The procedural logic had delivered a unanimous vote in service of approvals that had just passed against national opposition. McGlennon had been on the Board since 1995. He understood, better than most, what a 5-0 vote can be made to mean.

A fourth Skiffes Creek vote followed that night, on a procedural Appeal of a Code of Virginia 15.2-2232 Finding — a question about whether the project's planning posture met the requirements of state law concerning utility siting. The appeal vote ran 3-2 to approve, same alignment as the rezoning and SUP.

By the end of the meeting, the Board had taken four votes on Skiffes Creek. Three had come back 3-2 against national opposition. One had come back 5-0 in support of the public safety of the approvals that had just passed.

Skiffes Creek's Aftermath The chamber emptied near midnight. The reporters filed their stories. The Bay Journal reporter would, in subsequent weeks, publish coverage of the Board's vote and its relationship to the broader federal permitting process that the Skiffes Creek transmission line was subject to. The *Daily Press* ran a story on the front page of the Williamsburg section. The Virginia Gazette covered the vote in detail.

The national preservation organizations did not accept the decision quietly. The National Trust for Historic Preservation continued its advocacy through federal channels, eventually contributing to the litigation that would, in subsequent years, lead to a partial reversal of the federal permits for the project at the Court of Appeals level. James City County's vote was the local government's most consequential commitment on the case, even if it would not be the federal record's last word, and the Board's decision held.

The Save the James Alliance continued its work but did not assemble around any subsequent JCC Board case in the way it had assembled around Skiffes Creek. The coalition was, by its nature, federally focused — its work was about the historic-properties impact of a transmission-line project that spanned multiple jurisdictions, federal and state. Its presence at the chamber on July 11 had been a peak rather than the beginning of an ongoing relationship.

What Skiffes Creek demonstrated about the cohort 4 Board's procedural posture was visible in

the four votes themselves. The Board had absorbed national-organization opposition, three-hour hearings, organized resident testimony, and the County's own withdrawal from the federal mitigation agreement, and had approved the project 3-2. The dissenting supervisors had registered their dissents. The approving supervisors had registered their reasoning. The override pattern that had begun with Two Drummers a year earlier was now in operation on cases of the largest scale the chamber had seen.

After Skiffes The remainder of 2017 unfolded at a similar tempo. The case docket included additional rezoning and SUP applications, several budget items, and the routine work of the County. The Board met under the new January 2017 schedule: business meetings on the second Tuesday of each month at 5 p.m., work sessions on the fourth Tuesday at 4 p.m. The chamber adjusted to the new format. Public-comment turnout at the business meetings remained at roughly the same level as it had been before the change. The work sessions, without public-comment slots, drew minimal attendance from non-staff observers.

In December 2017, the Board considered Case No. Z-0002-2017 and MP-0002-2017, the Parke at Ford's Colony, a rezoning for a senior-housing development in the area surrounding the long-established Ford's Colony retirement community. The Planning Commission had reviewed the application. The Board's deliberation drew speakers on multiple sides of the question. The vote came back 4-1, with one supervisor dissenting.

The Parke at Ford's Colony case sits at the boundary of how the override pattern is counted. Read one way — strictly, as the corpus this book draws on tends to read these things — it is a contested split-vote with one dissenter rather than a full Planning Commission override. Read another way, it is a fifth case in 2017 in which the Board's deliberation included substantive opposition that did not prevail. The book records the vote at the boundary and moves on.

The pattern by the end of 2017 was visible. The cohort 4 Board had, in eighteen months, approved at least five and possibly more land-use cases that contained substantive opposition from staff, the Planning Commission, or organized resident coalitions. The Skiffes Creek approval had drawn national attention. The Taylor Farm sequence had demonstrated that the Board's willingness to override survived procedural challenges. The Two Drummers and Gate House Farms cases had established the precedent that overrides could happen on smaller cases as well as large ones.

What the period had not produced — and would not produce for several more years — was an organized resident coalition with a petition, a coordinated counter-campaign, and a sustained mobilization across multiple meetings. The Save the James Alliance had been active on Skiffes Creek, but its work was largely national in scope and did not extend into the chamber's local public-comment record in the way that later coalitions would. The Wellington HOA had spoken on cases that affected its subdivision. The James City County Citizens Coalition had spoken on Greenspace. Individual recurring commenters — Henderson, Swanenburg, Marjorie Ponziani, Carol Anderson — had continued their patterns. But the kind of named-coalition civic infrastructure that would arrive at Hazelwood Farms in 2022 had not yet assembled itself around the override pattern as the override pattern.

That assembly would take time. The civic side of the override question was, in 2017, still learning what it was responding to.

The November Cycle The November 2017 election was the first under the staggered-terms ordinance that McGlennon and Hipple had moved a year earlier. Two seats were up: McGlennon's

Roberts seat and Onizuk's Jamestown seat. The other three (Larson in Berkeley, Sadler in Stonehouse, Hipple in Powhatan) would not face voters until 2019.

McGlennon ran for and won re-election in Roberts. The race was contested but the outcome was not seriously in doubt; McGlennon had represented the District since the mid-1990s and was, by 2017, the most familiar elected official in James City County government.

Onizuk did not stand for re-election in Jamestown. The Jamestown seat went to a different candidate: James O. Icenhour, Jr., the former supervisor who had served the Powhatan seat from 2008 through 2013 and the Jamestown seat for two years before that. Icenhour, who had been in the chamber as a citizen-commenter in January 2014, was returning to the dais. He would be sworn in for the January 2018 organizational meeting.

The Board taking office in January 2018 would have, in the Jamestown chair, a supervisor who had served on the Board before and who knew the chamber's procedural mechanics from a previous era. The other four supervisors would continue: McGlennon in Roberts, Larson in Berkeley, Sadler in Stonehouse, Hipple in Powhatan. The override pattern that had emerged in cohort 4 would carry forward, with Icenhour replacing Onizuk as the fifth member.

Closing the Override Years The cohort that had produced the override pattern was, looking back from January 2018, distinctive in two respects.

It had contested its own overrides. The 2017 Skiffes Creek 3-2 alignment, the 4-1 Taylor Farm sequence, the eventual 3-2 reapproval — these were divided votes. The supervisors who voted to override staff or Planning Commission recommendations did so against substantive dissent from their colleagues. McGlennon and Larson, in particular, registered dissents on multiple cases across the period. The Board approved the cases. It also recorded the disagreement.

It had operated in a chamber where civic infrastructure had not yet organized itself in counter-form. Speakers came to the lectern, sometimes in numbers, sometimes alone. Coalitions formed around individual cases but did not assemble across cases into recognizable, named, persistent oppositional organizations. The Skiffes Creek hearing had drawn thirty speakers; the Hazelwood Farms hearing five years later would draw twenty-nine and a 992-signature petition. The difference would not be primarily in the number of speakers. It would be in the structure of the organization those speakers represented.

What lay ahead, in the cohort 5 era that would begin in January 2018, was a different rhythm. The override pattern would continue, but the contestation around it would diminish. The dissents would grow rarer. The chamber would, by mid-cohort, fill less often. The cases would still come; the Board would still act on them; the supervisors would, by and large, agree.

The chamber on Mounts Bay Road in December 2017, at the last regular meeting of the cohort 4 period, looked the same as it had two years earlier. The chairmanship for the upcoming year had already been worked out informally. Larson would take the chair in 2018. Icenhour would arrive in January and learn the file.

The override pattern, which had been new in 2016, was now a feature of how the Board operated. It would remain one for the rest of the period this book covers.

Chapter Four

The Quiet Stretch and the Hearings That Broke It (2018–2023)

A Returning Supervisor The January 9, 2018 regular meeting was Icenhour's first on the dais in five years. He had been a citizen-commenter at the lectern in January 2014, ten months after his last regular-supervisor meeting. He had been to Mounts Bay Road in the intervening years to vote, to attend, to keep up. On the night of January 9 he sat in the Jamestown chair, which had not been his before — Onizuk had held it through cohort 4, and Icenhour had held the Powhatan chair before that. The chair was new to him; the chamber around it was the chamber he had left in 2013.

Larson took the chairman's gavel for 2018. Hipple, in his fifth year on the Board, served as vice chairman. McGlennon, Sadler, and Icenhour rounded out the dais. The County Administrator was Bryan J. Hill. The County Attorney was Adam R. Kinsman, now permanently in the role after his interim service.

The agenda for the first meeting was routine. A few resolutions of appreciation, the annual chair selections, a consent calendar, and the budget calendar setting. Public-comment turnout was modest. The chamber was about a third full.

What the chamber would feel like for most of the next six years was already being established that night. The Board would meet on the schedule McGlennon had set in 2017 — one business meeting at 5 p.m. on the second Tuesday, one work session at 4 p.m. on the fourth Tuesday. The business meetings would carry the public-hearing items. The work sessions would carry the policy and briefing items. Public-comment turnout, on the meetings that drew it, would average lower than it had in the preceding cohort. Some of that reflected the shift in meeting times. Some of it reflected the kinds of cases on the docket — fewer high-mobilization land-use cases in the first years of the cohort, more procedural and budget items that drew less crowd. Some of it reflected what would be hard to disentangle later: a change in how residents related to the chamber, and to the Board's behavior in it.

In the corpus this book draws on, cohort 4's average public-comment turnout at meetings flagged for at least one split vote or contradiction had been 12.8 speakers per meeting. Cohort 5's, beginning January 2018, would be 8.2. The drop was a slow ebb across the first eighteen months of the period rather than a single moment.

A Quiet Year Through 2018 and into 2019, the Board's docket carried what looked, in retrospect, like a quieter set of cases than the preceding cohort had managed. There were no Skiffes Creek-scale rezonings on the agenda. There were no national-organization objections filed against any individual project. The override pattern continued, but on smaller cases — short-term-rental Special Use Permits in residential subdivisions, telecommunications towers, modest commercial rezonings.

A typical Tuesday in this period illustrates the texture. On March 13, 2018, the Board met at 5 p.m. for the first regular meeting under the new schedule. The agenda carried eleven items: a Resolution of Appreciation, two presentations from County departments, the consent calendar (eight items), one public hearing on a rezoning of approximately twenty acres in the upper County (three speakers; passed 5-0), one public hearing on a SUP for a telecommunications tower on a parcel near Anderson's Corner (one speaker; passed 5-0), and routine financial reports. Total run time, about ninety minutes. Public-comment turnout, two residents on items unrelated to the agenda. The meeting adjourned without contested votes.

By April, May, and June of 2018, this had become the rhythm. Most regular meetings ran ninety minutes to two hours. Public-comment turnout averaged three to five residents. The cases that came through the Planning Commission with denial recommendations were a small fraction of the docket, and even those were often handled with limited public attention. The chamber was working through its routine business at a pace that, in retrospect, looked like a Board catching its breath after Skiffes Creek.

The first STR-SUP precursor — the 100 Lake Drive case from June 2016, where Onizuk had recused — had been a single instance. By 2018 the Board was beginning to see additional STR-SUP applications, mostly for individual property owners who wished to operate Airbnb-style rentals from their existing homes. The applications were small. Each came through with a planning-staff recommendation and a Planning Commission vote. The Board considered each, and sometimes approved, sometimes denied, sometimes split.

The general pattern of the cohort 5 votes on these cases would, by the end of 2023, look different from the cohort 4 votes. The cohort 4 contradictions, where the Board approved over staff or PC denial recommendations, had run 67 percent contested (3-2 or 4-1 splits with substantive dissent). The cohort 5 contradictions would run 15 percent contested. The Board would, by mid-cohort, be approving cases over staff or PC denial recommendations on 5-0 votes — the dissents that had marked the cohort 4 era largely absent. The override pattern was continuing. The contestation around it was not.

Two readings of that shift were available at the time and remain available now. The first reading attributed the change to selection: by 2019 or 2020, the cases that would have generated 3-2 splits were no longer reaching the Board, either because applicants had learned to avoid filing such cases or because staff had begun framing recommendations to align with the Board's working majority. The second reading attributed it to normalization: the override pattern had become routine enough by 2019 that supervisors who would have voted no on principle in 2017 no longer did, having absorbed the override behavior into the Board's standard operating practice. The corpus this book draws on cannot decide between the two readings cleanly. Both readings have empirical support. Neither has overwhelming evidence against it. What is observable is the shift in the vote-margin record. It happened. It was real. The mechanisms are what the working papers this book sits alongside try to take up.

The chamber, meanwhile, kept emptying. By late 2019 the rows in the back of the room were rarely filled. The recurring commenters who had appeared so often in the 2013–2015 period — Henderson, Swanenburg, Marjorie Ponziani, Carol Anderson, Keith Sadler, Sue Sadler (now on the dais), Ed Oyer, Rosanne Reddin — had thinned. Some had moved out of the County. Others had died, were ill, or were caring for relatives who were. A handful had simply stopped coming.

Henderson, in particular, had begun a stretch that the corpus's named-commenter inventory would later identify as a bimodal pattern. From 2015 to 2017, he had appeared at the lectern forty-seven times. From 2018 to 2023, fourteen times across six years. His presence at the chamber was reduced rather than absent.

What had pulled Henderson out of the chamber across these years is something the corpus can describe rather than explain. The override pattern continued in his absence. The cases he would have contested were contested less. The chair he had occupied in the back of the chamber on dozens of evenings was occupied by other residents, when it was occupied at all. The 110-appearance total he would eventually accumulate across the post-2014 record was, in this period, frozen.

COVID In March 2020 the Board held its last meeting in a full chamber for over a year. Within weeks the Governor’s emergency-declaration framework had restructured how public bodies in Virginia conducted business. The Board moved to a hybrid format: some supervisors physically present in the chamber under distancing protocols, others attending electronically. Public comment continued, by appointment, with reduced capacity in the chamber and a phone-in option for residents who could not or chose not to come in person.

The chamber’s geography under the new protocols was unmistakable. The dais was set with plexiglass partitions between supervisor stations. The chairs in the back of the chamber were spaced six feet apart, reducing total seating by more than half. Residents who wished to attend were screened at the door, asked about exposure, and assigned seats. The public-comment slot continued, but with the running theme of fewer people in the room than would have been there under normal circumstances.

A representative early-COVID meeting was the April 14, 2020 regular meeting, conducted under emergency-declaration protocols. The agenda carried the County’s response to the pandemic: CARES Act funding allocations, an emergency budget transfer for County Health Department equipment, a routine procurement matter, and a brief discussion of how the County’s election machinery would handle the upcoming primary under COVID conditions. The County Administrator gave his report by video link from a separate room. Two supervisors attended in person. Three attended electronically. The public-comment slot drew no in-person speakers. One resident addressed the Board by phone, raising a concern about the County’s communication of pandemic guidelines. The meeting adjourned after seventy minutes.

The chamber, that night, was the strangest version of itself it had been across the period. Empty chairs, plexiglass, the supervisors at distance from each other, no public attendance, the County Attorney’s voice through a speaker. The County’s work continued in a form it had not held before.

The Board’s docket through 2020 and into 2021 included the usual budget cycle, conducted under COVID restrictions; the usual rezoning and SUP cases, taken up with limited public attendance; and a steady stream of pandemic-response items — funding allocations for the County Health Department, CARES Act distributions, infrastructure adjustments to permit electronic meetings. Public-comment turnout was lower under COVID protocols than it would have been without them. By how much was difficult to determine cleanly, because the chamber’s capacity had been physically reduced and the case docket through the period contained no major mobilizing items.

The cohort 5 attendance drop pre-dated COVID. The data the analytical papers draw on shows that 2018 and 2019 — before the pandemic restrictions arrived — had already produced public-comment averages in the same range that 2020 and 2021 would. The pandemic continued a drop already underway.

By the fall of 2021 the chamber had returned to a more conventional configuration. The plexiglass had been removed. The seats were no longer spaced. Residents could attend without prior registration. The full-capacity chamber was, in many ways, the same as it had been in early 2020. But the attendance patterns of the post-COVID period did not return to where they had been in 2014 and 2015. The chamber’s regular attendance was lower. The recurring commenters who returned were fewer. The pattern that had begun in 2018 continued.

A Schedule Adjusted On January 4, 2021, the Board met for its annual organizational meeting. The roll call recorded five supervisors: Hipple, Icenhour, Larson, McGlennon, Sadler. The annual

chair rotation handed Hipple the gavel.

The work-session topics for 2021 included, as a standing item, a discussion of the Board's meeting schedule and times. McGlennon, who had moved the original schedule restructure four years earlier in January 2017, raised the question of whether the existing arrangement was working. The 4 p.m. work session, he noted, was running into early-evening conflicts for some supervisors and staff. Several other supervisors agreed that the timing was awkward.

The discussion settled on a different format. The work session, which under the existing arrangement met at 4 p.m. on the fourth Tuesday of each month, would be renamed the Business Meeting. The Business Meeting would move from 4 p.m. to 1 p.m. The second-Tuesday regular meeting would continue at 5 p.m. with its public-comment slot.

McGlennon moved the change. The vote was 5-0.

Under the new arrangement, the Board's two monthly meetings differed both in time and in character. The second-Tuesday Regular Meeting at 5 p.m. carried public hearings and formal public-comment slots, drew the residents and observers, and was the meeting most members of the public knew. The fourth-Tuesday Business Meeting at 1 p.m. — moved from 4 p.m. by the 2021 motion — carried policy discussions, briefings, work on items that did not require formal action, and items where the Board wanted to discuss before they came to a formal vote.

The 1 p.m. start time was, in practical terms, during the standard work day. Residents who held weekday employment in the County or in the surrounding region — Newport News, Hampton, Williamsburg city, Yorktown — would not be able to attend without taking time off work. The Business Meeting, as restructured, was practically inaccessible to most of the County's working-age residents.

The change was not framed at the time as a barrier to public participation. The supervisors who voted for it noted the scheduling improvements and the matched fit with the Board's working rhythm. The 1 p.m. meeting would be open to the public — anyone who wished to attend could come, and the materials would be in the agenda packet and on the County's website — but it would not have a public-comment slot of the kind that the 5 p.m. Regular Meeting carried, and it would not draw residents to the chamber.

That mattered in a way that did not yet have a name in January 2021. Consequential decisions handled at the Business Meeting would, by virtue of the schedule, not face the same kind of public attention that decisions handled at the Regular Meeting would. The procedural sequence had not changed; the audience for it had.

Four years later, in 2024 and 2025, the Consolidated Government Center Project would move through the Business Meeting slot for the better part of a year, including the Interim Agreement votes in January 2024 and December 2024 that committed the County to the project's framework before any Regular Meeting public hearing was held on the resulting plat vacation or site-work approvals. By the time the Regular Meeting hearings arrived in 2025, the substantive decisions had already been made at the 1 p.m. meetings the public had not been positioned to attend.

McGlennon, who had moved both the 2017 and the 2021 motions, was a professor of government at William and Mary. He understood, better than most, how procedural architecture shapes substantive outcomes.

Continuing Care The cohort's first organized civic mobilization, after Skiffes Creek, came in 2021 and stretched into 2022 around an item known as the Continuing Care case: a proposed amendment to the Master Plan and proffers for a Continuing Care Retirement Community development at Ford's Colony.

The case had been in process for some time. Ford's Colony, a large established gated community in James City County, had a parcel within its boundaries that had been rezoned in 2008 to accommodate a Continuing Care Retirement Community, known as the Village at Ford's Colony. The 2008 approval had permitted up to 741 units, rooms, and beds across the property, with proffers intended to mitigate impacts on the surrounding community. The development had not been built in the form originally proposed. Frye Development, LLC, the new applicant, requested an amendment to reduce the total scale to 516 units and reconfigure the site plan to include up to 286 age-restricted single-family and multifamily dwelling units in addition to the facility portion of the property.

The case generated organized opposition from residents of Ford's Colony and the surrounding subdivisions. The opposition's argument focused on the proposed mix of dwelling units versus institutional facilities, traffic impacts on the surrounding road network, and the deviation from the 2008 proffer framework. Several recurring commenters appeared at the lectern over multiple hearings. A coalition of Ford's Colony residents organized through their internal HOA structure and through informal channels. Letters to the County, signed by groups of residents, accumulated in the record.

The first vote on the case came on January 11, 2022. That vote was procedural: a motion to postpone the matter for additional staff and applicant work. The motion to postpone passed. The substantive decision was deferred.

The substantive vote came on September 13, 2022. By then the applicant had further reduced the proposal to 470 units, including up to 270 dwelling units and 200 facility-portion units, with updated proffers including a unit-mixture limit and a traffic-signal warrant analysis. The Planning Commission had reviewed the revised application. The hearing on September 13 drew speakers on both sides.

Senior Planner Thomas Wysong presented the staff report. He walked through the proffer revisions, the unit-mixture limit, the traffic-signal warrant analysis, the comparison to other CCRCs in the County — Williamsburg Landing, Patriot's Colony, WindsorMeade, Brookdale Chambrel — that had been cited as institutional comparators during the multi-year process. The application before the Board, he noted, would result in a substantially smaller development than the 2008 approval had authorized. The proffers had been strengthened. The applicant had responded to the concerns raised at earlier hearings.

Public comment followed. Several Ford's Colony residents spoke in opposition. They named traffic, density, the comparison to the original 2008 framework, the perceived loss of the institutional character the CCRC concept had originally promised. A few residents spoke in favor, including representatives of organizations that had been working with the applicant on the design.

The motion to approve came from Hipple. The vote was 3-2: Hipple, Larson, and Sadler in favor; Icenhour and McGlennon in opposition.

The Continuing Care decision, taken on its own, was a development case with significant stakes for the surrounding community but limited national or regional reach. What gave it weight in the chamber's rhythm of 2022 was that it followed another major contested case from the same year by seven months, and was followed by another within months. The cohort 5 chamber, which

had been quiet through 2018 and 2019 and into 2021, was beginning to absorb the organized civic mobilization that had not been present at the earlier override votes.

The mobilization had arrived first at Hazelwood Farms.

Hazelwood Farms The Hazelwood family had owned the farm since the 1980s. In 1998, the Board of Supervisors had recognized them for their stewardship. By February 8, 2022, the family was proposing to rezone 325 acres on Barhamsville Road into something called the Enterprise Center, with the residential component of an earlier design peeled off after community pushback. The applicants' attorney that night was Tim Trant of Kaufman & Canoles. The Hazelwoods themselves were present. Larry Hazelwood and Debbie Hazelwood took seats in the gallery. R.M. Hazelwood could not attend.

The chamber was full. John McGlennon, chairing for 2022 under that year's chair rotation, noted at the opening that numerous people had come for the case and that he appreciated their interest. He explained the format. Fifteen minutes for the applicant. Fifteen minutes for group presentations. Five minutes for individual comments. The longstanding tradition of civility, he said, would govern.

Trant went first. He named his project team. He walked the Board through the proffers, the traffic study, the design. He pointed out that the Planning Commission had voted in favor of the rezoning. Frank Polster, the Planning Commissioner who had reported the PC's vote earlier in the evening, had given a count of 4-2 to recommend approval. Polster, like the rest of the Commission, had been deliberating on this matter for nearly two years. The case had moved through Commission consideration, community outreach, applicant revisions, and a redesign that had removed the original residential component. The Commission's recommendation reflected its read on the cumulative work the application had been through.

Polster, in his earlier presentation to the Board, had also noted what the PC had been hearing from residents. The public-comment record at the Commission hearings, he said, had been substantial. Traffic on Barhamsville Road, Old Stage Road, and Leisure Road was the most frequently raised concern. Buffer requirements along Leisure Road had been a sticking point in the design negotiation. One Commissioner had been concerned about the open-ended SUP uses and the long-term impact on the upper County. Another had been concerned that the location could potentially limit development in other parts of the County such as Anderson's Corner due to capacity considerations.

Trant, after Polster's presentation, walked the Board through the applicant's response to these concerns. The proffers, he said, addressed the buffer requirements. The trip-generation analysis addressed the traffic concerns. The proposed Foreign Trade Zone designation would provide economic benefits to the County. The proffer commitments would last across the life of the property.

When Trant finished, Ms. Darlene Previs, of 211 Old Stage Road, took the lectern. She introduced herself as the representative of Save Rural James City County, a group of 992 concerned citizens. She asked the Board not to take anything presented at face value.

What Previs did at the lectern was different from what the people before her had done. She had brought numbers. The current SUP rules in James City County allowed for 10,000 square feet of structure. This SUP requested eight times that. There was no end user identified for the property. New Town, Stonehouse, Candle Factory, and Colonial Heritage had all gone through master-plan amendment processes for their additions; should Hazelwood not face the same standard? She asked about bonding. She asked about built-in severability if buildings sat empty. The rezoning, she said, read like a blank check from a personal account with no detail on how the money would be spent.

She also brought traffic. Her group’s calculations, using the light-industry code the applicant had cited, projected 14,880 trips per day against the 4,944 the applicant had projected for the shopping center portion. Combined with the Village Center across the road, total trip generation by Save Rural JCC’s calculation came to 36,103 daily trips. Existing traffic on the corridor from I-64 to Route 60, by 2017 counts, was 19,000. Cumulative would be 55,103.

She handed each supervisor a printed handout.

Twenty-eight speakers followed her. Some named what their land was worth and what they thought would happen to it after the project broke ground. Others raised the water table, stormwater, immature buffers, protected species, the cost of failed buffering at neighboring developments. A few spoke for the proposal. Joseph Swanenburg, who had been at this same Board many times before, addressed what he called misinformation about the project and noted that 195 of the property’s 325 acres had been commercially zoned since 1972. He preferred managed development over what could happen by right.

A representative of the Williamsburg-area business community spoke in support, citing the County’s need for industrial-zoned land to compete with neighboring jurisdictions. A representative of a local environmental group spoke against, citing the buffer adequacy concerns and the potential impact on the Chickahominy. Several individual residents spoke from each side. The hearing covered more than ninety minutes of public testimony alone.

The hearing closed near midnight. The Board deliberated. Mr. Icenhour disclosed that he had met with Trant, Larry Hazelwood, and the AES Consulting team in preparation, and he thanked the Hazelwood family for their generations of work in the County. Then he raised concerns about traffic and about the open-ended uses the SUP would authorize. McGlennon spoke after him in the same direction.

The motion came from Michael Hipple to approve the ordinance and the resolution. Hipple, Larson, Sadler voted aye. Icenhour and McGlennon voted nay. Z-19-0006 and SUP-19-0005 passed three to two.

Save Rural James City County had presented 992 signatures, organized infrastructure, and an evening’s worth of testimony. It had finished one vote short.

Hazelwood’s Aftermath The Save Rural James City County coalition did not dissolve immediately after the vote. For several weeks the organization remained active, organizing follow-up communications to the County, supporting residents who wished to engage with the post-vote design phases, and exploring whether any legal challenges might be brought against the procedural posture of the approval. Eventually, like Save the James before it, the coalition wound down. Its principal organizers continued to attend Board meetings periodically but did not form around a successor coalition with comparable structure.

The Virginia Gazette and the Williamsburg Yorktown Daily ran extended coverage of the Hazelwood vote. The Gazette’s analysis focused on the procedural history of the case and the substantive arguments the petition had raised. WYDaily ran shorter pieces over the days following the vote. Williamsburg Watch, by 2022 operating as a substantial regional news outlet, covered the vote and continued to track the project’s subsequent stages.

What the Hazelwood vote demonstrated about the cohort 5 chamber was that organized resident opposition at scale — including a counted petition, named coalition organizers, a multi-month

organizing campaign, and an evening's worth of testimony — could be absorbed by the working-majority alignment without producing a different outcome. The Board's 3-2 vote held the override pattern, but on a 3-2 alignment rather than the 5-0 that had characterized the more recent intervening cases. The dissent came from the cohort 4 alignment that had been most likely to register such dissent — McGlennon and Icenhour, the two long-serving supervisors who had been on the dais during the earlier years of the period.

Hertzler In April 2023 the Board considered SUP-20-0010, a case concerning Hertzler Clearing and Grading Company on a parcel that had been the subject of a previous Board vote more than twenty years earlier. The 2003 vote, by a Board that included none of the current supervisors, had been a unanimous denial of a permit sought by the same family business. The 2023 application sought to revise the framework and obtain a Special Use Permit for the same use that had been denied in the earlier era.

The case drew speakers on both sides. Several residents spoke against the application, referencing the public history of the prior denial. The applicant team, represented by an attorney on behalf of Mr. Steven and Mrs. Mary Hertzler, noted the changes in operations and the proposed mitigations. The Board's deliberation included references to the 2003 record. The April 2023 vote came back contested, with the case continuing through additional procedural steps before a substantive decision was reached.

The Hertzler case continued through 2023 with additional hearings. In October 2023 the Board took up a continuation of the matter and voted again. The October vote split 3-2 and included substantive dissent from supervisors who pointed back to the 2003 record and the question of whether the County had committed itself, in that prior era, to a position the current Board was now departing from.

The Hertzler sequence is one of the cases the working papers this book sits alongside flag as a late-cohort contradiction with characteristics of the late-tenure breakaway pattern: a supervisor whose departure was imminent registering dissent on a case that the Board would have voted differently on with that supervisor still in the chair. Sadler was, by late 2023, in her final months on the Board. Her votes during this period would, in retrospect, look like the votes of a supervisor who had begun the process of stepping back from the working-majority alignment that had defined the cohort.

Lake Powell Road The home at 2868 Lake Powell Road was Becky W.'s, and the meeting on June 13, 2023 was about whether the family could keep it.

Becky W. did not come. Her daughter Lisa W. came. Lisa's sister Dena W. came too, with the family-owned property at 2884 Lake Powell Road waiting its own turn on the same agenda. Their father, Dudley W., had been a long-time James City County resident. He had died a few months earlier.

The Waltrip family had filed two special-use permit applications, SUP-23-0009 for 2868 and SUP-23-0010 for 2884, both seeking authority to operate short-term rentals on Lake Powell Road. By 2023 the Board of Supervisors had been hearing STR-SUP applications for several years. The Planning Commission had recommended denial of both. Chairman Rich Krapf reported the Commission's reasoning at the hearing: short-term rentals in this corridor met neither the criteria for compatibility with surrounding development nor the standard for fairness across the broader category of applications coming through. The Commission, Krapf said, was struggling with fairness

and equitability regarding short-term rentals, and the points raised at this hearing were similar to those raised at recent SUP applications elsewhere in the County.

Lisa W. stood at the lectern with notes. She introduced herself, gave the address, and explained the situation. Her mother lived in the house. The family wanted her to stay there. The rental income from operating the property as a short-term rental was what made that financially possible. Her family did not propose to leave the home behind for an investment property; they proposed to keep their mother in it.

A neighbor spoke. He owned rental property at 2860 Lake Powell Road, just down the road, and at 113 and 129 Douglas Lane, all of which bordered the Waltrip parcels. He spoke in support.

Dena W. spoke after her sister, also in support, naming the same family situation.

Then Ms. Larson asked to be heard before the vote. Her uncle and Mr. Dudley W. were close friends, she said. Mr. Waltrip had been a long-time County resident and had recently passed away. She extended her condolences to the family. She said she felt she should recuse herself.

She did not recuse. She continued speaking. She noted the family's desire to keep their mother in her home and the support of the neighbors. The Board's struggles with short-term rentals were real, she added. The commercial businesses nearby and the speeding on Lake Powell Road were real concerns. The Waltrips, she said, were aware of them.

The motion on SUP-23-0009 was made by John McGlennon. It passed 5-0. Hipple, Icenhour, Larson, McGlennon, and Sadler all voting yes. The Planning Commission had voted 4-2 against. The Board had overridden the Planning Commission on a hearing where the central applicant was a family the supervisor herself, on the record, had said recusal might be appropriate over.

The Board then moved to SUP-23-0010, the second Waltrip property. Same alignment, same outcome.

A Cohort Closing The November 2023 election cycle was on the calendar as another staggered-terms cycle. Three seats were up: Larson's Berkeley seat, Sadler's Stonehouse seat, and Hipple's Powhatan seat. The other two (McGlennon's Roberts and Icenhour's Jamestown) had been on the 2021 ballot and would not face voters until 2025.

McGlennon and Icenhour, both in their respective seats, were not on the 2023 ballot. Larson stood and won re-election in Berkeley. Hipple stood and won re-election in Powhatan. Both were returned for terms beginning January 2024.

Sadler did not stand. She announced that she would not seek re-election when her term expired and that she intended to step back from the Board to focus on family and personal commitments. Her formal departure would come in December 2023. The Stonehouse seat she had held since 2016 would become vacant.

The departing-dissenter pattern that the working papers describe — supervisors who had voted with the working majority for most of their tenure but registered late-tenure dissents on contested cases — was, in Sadler's case, modest but visible. Her six lone NAYS across her tenure had clustered in the final year. Her July 2023 dissent on a procedural matter and her September 2023 dissent on a routine motion had both come at a time when she was, by her own subsequent account, beginning to plan her departure.

Then, on November 14, 2023, the cohort 5 era had its final consequential vote. The Board considered the Consolidated Government Center Proposal, a comprehensive package that the County had been developing for more than a year and that would, if approved in subsequent steps, commit James City County to a major capital project on the County's central administrative campus.

The vote that night was 4-1 to advance the proposal to the next procedural stage. The dissenting vote was McGlennon's lone NAY — the only NAY the case had drawn from any supervisor at that stage of deliberation.

The Consolidated Government Center would not return to a substantive contested vote at the Mounts Bay Road chamber for another year and a half. The procedural sequence McGlennon had moved in 2017 and adjusted in 2021 was about to deliver the project's most consequential interim decisions at the Business Meeting slot, away from the Regular Meeting's public-comment audience. McGlennon's January 23, 2024 vote — seventy days after his lone NAY — would be a YEA on the project's First Interim Agreement. Every subsequent McGlennon vote on the Government Center, across the cohort 6 period, would be a YEA.

In the chamber, on December 12, 2023, at Sadler's last regular meeting, the Board passed the year's final consent calendar without dissent. Sadler received recognition from her colleagues for her seven years of service. The chairman thanked her for her work. The meeting adjourned.

The cohort 5 era closed quietly. The chamber had been emptier than the cohort before it. The override pattern had continued but with less public attention and less internal contestation. The cases that had broken the quiet — Hazelwood, Continuing Care, the Hertzler sequence, the Lake Powell Road family-anchored cases — had each been carried through the existing procedural architecture without producing a structural change in the Board's behavior. The civic infrastructure that had assembled around Save Rural James City County in 2022 had not held together across cases.

What lay ahead, in the cohort 6 era beginning January 2024, was a Board that would carry forward the cohort 5 working-majority alignment with one substitution: Sadler's Stonehouse seat would be filled by a different supervisor, and the Government Center project would be the case around which everything else in the new period would orbit.

Chapter Five

The Government Center, the Lawsuit, the Budget Hearing (2024–2026)

A New Supervisor The January 9, 2024 organizational meeting was the first under the new Board. Sadler's Stonehouse chair was now held by Barbara E. Null, who had been appointed to fill the vacancy in advance of the new year. Null, a Stonehouse District resident with a background that the County's official record describes briefly and that her own subsequent public-comment patterns would fill in more completely, was the first new supervisor on the Board since 2018. She was, by political background, a Republican with what observers and her own statements would frame as a taxpayer-attentive approach to County governance. Her name had been familiar to County staff before her appointment; she had been an occasional commenter at the lectern in earlier years and had served in various capacities on County-related volunteer bodies.

The other four supervisors continued from cohort 5: McGlennon in Roberts, Larson in Berkeley, Icenhour in Jamestown, Hipple in Powhatan. Larson took the chairman's gavel for 2024.

The County Administrator was Scott A. Stevens, who had taken the position in 2023 after Bryan J. Hill's departure. The County Attorney was Adam R. Kinsman, who had served permanently in that role since 2017. Both would be central figures in the coming year's procedural sequence.

The first meeting moved through its standard agenda. The Board adopted committee assignments. Larson, as new chair, set the tone with brief opening remarks. Null, taking her seat for the first time, was welcomed by the other supervisors. McGlennon noted briefly that she was joining a Board that had institutional history extending back decades, and that the chamber would be patient with her learning curve as she took the file. Null thanked her colleagues. The meeting adjourned without contested items.

Null's first months on the Board, like the first months of any new supervisor, included extensive time learning the County's operations, the procedural mechanics of the dais, the casework that had been moving through Planning Commission for some time before her arrival. She attended the regional commission meetings the Board's Stonehouse representative typically attended. She met with County staff for briefings. She held her first town halls in her District in the early months of the year. She would, over the course of the year, develop the working relationships with her colleagues that any new supervisor needs.

The Board's working alignment, as the year progressed, was Larson, McGlennon, Icenhour, and Hipple — the four cohort 5 holdovers — with Null finding her positions case by case. On the routine items the working majority remained intact. On the cases where she registered concerns about scale, fiscal impact, or procedural posture, she sometimes voted with the working majority and sometimes registered modest dissent. Through 2024 her voting record looked like a new supervisor's voting record: largely aligned with the senior members, with occasional independent positions on cases that had specific characteristics she had concerns about.

The Pivot Two weeks after Null's first organizational meeting, on January 23, 2024, the Board met at its newly-scheduled 1 p.m. Business Meeting. The agenda included Item No. 3: a First Interim Agreement for the Consolidated Government Center Project.

The Consolidated Government Center Project was a multi-year capital initiative to replace and consolidate the County's aging administrative campus. The project had been in conceptual development for years. The County's existing administrative buildings on Mounts Bay Road dated to various periods of the County's growth, with the oldest portions in service since the late 1970s and the most recent additions completed in the early 2000s. The buildings had reached the point in their service lives where the question of replacement versus renovation was a real one, and the County had begun studying consolidation options some years earlier.

The project had been the subject of work sessions, briefings, and informal discussions through the cohort 5 period. The County had retained outside consultants to evaluate the existing facilities, propose options, and develop preliminary cost estimates. The project had been included in the Capital Improvement Plan in successive budget cycles. Site planning, design preliminaries, and developer selection had advanced through internal County processes. By late 2023, the project was at the point where a formal interim agreement with a developer partner was ready for Board action.

It had drawn its first contested Board vote on November 14, 2023 — McGlennon's lone NAY — at a Regular Meeting under the previous chair. The new year had brought the project to a formal interim-agreement stage.

The Interim Agreement was a procedural commitment to the project's framework. It identified a

developer partner, established the schedule for negotiating subsequent agreements, and bound the County to advance the project through the next phase of design and approvals. It was not the final approval; that would come in later Comprehensive Agreement and site-work votes. But it was the procedural step after which the project's overall trajectory would be substantially more difficult to reverse.

The Business Meeting at 1 p.m. drew a modest in-chamber audience. The County's staff was present. The developer team was present. Several residents who had taken note of the project's progression on the public-meeting calendar were present. The room was perhaps a third full.

McGlennon, who had cast the lone NAY on the underlying proposal seventy days earlier, addressed the case. He explained his reasoning in his own register. The County had been working on this project for some time. The current proposal addressed concerns that had been raised at earlier stages. The financial framework had been refined. The Interim Agreement was a procedural step, not a final commitment.

He voted yes.

The motion to approve the First Interim Agreement passed 5-0.

The seventy-day reversal — from McGlennon's November 14, 2023 lone NAY to his January 23, 2024 first YEA — is the tightest reversal sequence the corpus this book draws on records. It is not unprecedented in local government for a dissenting supervisor to align with the majority on a subsequent procedural step. It is unusual for that realignment to happen across such a short interval, on such a consequential matter, with so little intervening public deliberation.

What had changed in the seventy days. The Interim Agreement was a different procedural instrument from the November proposal. The developer team had refined certain elements. The County's staff had completed additional review. The negotiation around the framework had progressed. McGlennon, in his explanation, addressed the procedural posture and the changes that had moved it. He did not address the underlying question of whether the project itself was sound, or whether the consolidated approach was the right one for the County.

From January 23, 2024 forward, every McGlennon vote on the Government Center would be a YEA. The change orders, the special-use permit, the plat vacation, the site-work contract, the comprehensive agreement, the construction-management contract. Each one received McGlennon's support. The November 14, 2023 NAY would stand on the record as the only time across the entire arc of the project that the supervisor who had been on the Board longest had cast a dissenting vote.

The McGlennon arc — from a public skeptic at the November 2023 Regular Meeting to a project defender across the entire 2024-2025 sequence — is the subject of a separate analytical treatment in the teaching case *Representative Judgment After Public Opposition: A James City County Companion Case on Capital Projects, Institutional Continuity, and Changing One's Mind*. The case treats the substantive question of how a supervisor's institutional reasoning evolves across a sequence of related decisions. The narrative here does what the narrative can do: record the votes and the timing.

Through 2024 The remainder of 2024 unfolded with Government Center actions interspersed through the Board's regular calendar. The project moved through additional Business Meeting items: subsequent interim arrangements, design approvals, site planning preparation. The Regular Meeting at 5 p.m. continued to handle the public-comment slot and the formal public hearings on

items that required them. The Government Center, for most of 2024, remained in procedural stages that did not require formal public hearings.

The chamber, on Government Center nights, was modestly attended. Residents who paid close attention to the County's project calendar came. The recurring commenters — Henderson, Boarman, a few others — attended periodically. Larger crowds did not yet form around the project. The public-comment register included occasional questions about the cost, the design, the timeline.

Other cases moved through the chamber's docket on the year's regular agenda. The short-term-rental SUP cases continued, mostly approved over Planning Commission denial recommendations on increasingly unanimous Board votes. Several Public Service Area expansion applications came through, including the Westport and Liberty Ridge cases that drew their own public-comment patterns. The Board approved most of them.

A typical 2024 Regular Meeting in the post-Continuing-Care, pre-Government-Center-crescendo period: April 9, 2024, the Board met at 5 p.m. The agenda carried nine items, including two consent-calendar batches, one rezoning application that drew four speakers (passed 5-0), one Public Service Area expansion application that drew six speakers (passed 4-1 with Null dissenting), a budget transfer, and routine commission reports. Total run time, about two hours. Public-comment turnout, three residents on items unrelated to the agenda. The chamber that night was about half full. The five supervisors were on the dais. The meeting adjourned at 7:12 p.m.

This was the texture of routine cohort 6 business through 2024. Most evenings ran two hours. Public-comment turnout averaged four to six residents. The cases that came through drew modest attention. Null's emerging dissent pattern was visible on selected cases, more often on PSA expansions and short-term-rental SUPs than on the broader docket. The override pattern continued at the same density it had at the end of cohort 5.

Through the spring and into the summer of 2024, the chamber operated on the cohort 5 rhythm: working-majority votes on contested cases, modest dissent on a smaller number, the override pattern continuing. Null, in her first year on the dais, learned the file. Her voting record through 2024 showed her aligning with the working majority on most items, with occasional dissents on cases where she registered concerns about scale, fiscal impact, or what she would later articulate as the long-term character of the County.

A Solar Project on Ivy Hill Road On February 11, 2025, the Board took up SUP-24-0016, an application for a solar facility on 120 and 121 Ivy Hill Road. The applicant, Hedera Solar Facility, was proposing to install solar panels on roughly several dozen acres of agricultural land in the upper County. The Planning Commission had reviewed the application. The Board's deliberation drew supervisors with differing views on solar development in the County's agricultural and forested areas.

Hipple raised concerns about the proposal. The County's agricultural and forested land, he noted, had aesthetic and economic value that solar development could compromise. The withdrawal of property from Agricultural and Forestal Districts under the application's terms deviated from standards the County had established for AFD removal. He spoke at some length about his concerns.

Null agreed with Hipple's points. She emphasized the importance of the County's agriculture and forested land. She expressed her concern about the aesthetic qualities of those properties and the standards the County had set for AFD removal. She would, she said, oppose deviation from those standards.

McGlennon, Larson, and Icenhour voted to approve the application. Hipple and Null voted to oppose.

The vote came back 3-2 to approve. Hedera was approved over Hipple and Null's dissent.

Later in the same meeting, on a different item entirely, Null asked the Board a question. The discussion had turned to the Government Center project, which was at a stage that did not require a formal vote that night but was on the work-session agenda for discussion. Null asked whether a referendum was possible — whether the County could put the Government Center project to its voters before committing to the next major procedural step.

Mr. Kinsman, the County Attorney, responded. Virginia, he noted, was not a referendum state. The mechanism Null was asking about did not exist for this kind of capital project. The County's only direct accountability to its voters on the question would run through the four-year election cycle. The Board, as the elected body, had the authority to decide the project, and there was no Virginia procedural pathway for residents to require a binding referendum.

The exchange was brief. Kinsman's answer was correct under Virginia law. Null acknowledged the answer. The meeting moved on.

The Kinsman-Null exchange, on February 11, 2025, was the first time the question of a referendum had been put to the Board on the Government Center on the public record. It would not be the last. By October, the question would have been raised again, by speakers at the lectern, in language that named the County's procedural posture more sharply.

The Mood Begins to Shift Through the spring of 2025, the Government Center project moved through its design and approval stages. The Board took up items on the Business Meeting calendar that handled procedural milestones. The Regular Meeting public-comment slots began to draw a different mix of speakers.

The Save Rural James City County coalition, which had organized around Hazelwood Farms in 2022, had largely dissolved after that case. A new coalition had begun to form around the Government Center. The new coalition was less formally organized than Save Rural JCC had been; it operated primarily through online channels and through individual residents organizing under what came to be called the Change.org Government Center petition. The petition, which would by October 2025 collect near 1,000 signatures, framed the case as a fiscal and procedural matter. The cost of the project was substantial. The financial framework relied on Economic Development Authority revenue bonds rather than general-obligation debt, which meant that no voter referendum would be required for the financing under Virginia law. The combined effect, the petition argued, was that the County was about to commit itself to a major capital project through a financing structure that bypassed the direct-voter accountability that constitutional general-obligation debt would have required.

The petition's substantive critique was, by Virginia local-government standards, technically informed. EDA revenue bonds were a standard tool for capital project financing across Virginia counties. Their use did not, by itself, indicate any procedural impropriety. But the cumulative effect — the Business Meeting bifurcation that handled the project's interim agreements, the multi-jurisdictional sports facility authority that had been created in December 2023 for unrelated regional projects, the EDA revenue-bond structure that financed the Government Center itself — was that the County was operating a procedural architecture in which consequential decisions were being routed through venues that did not require formal public hearings or direct voter accountability.

That argument, made in the petition and in subsequent residents' comments at the lectern, was the substantive content of the opposition that would arrive at the chamber over the summer and into the fall of 2025.

June On June 10, 2025, the Board took up SUP-25-0003, a Special Use Permit related to the Government Center site. The application sought permission for specific land uses on the project's central parcel. The Planning Commission had reviewed the application. The hearing drew speakers in opposition.

The vote came back 4-1. Hipple, Icenhour, Larson, and McGlennon voted to approve. Null cast the lone NAY.

It was Null's first lone NAY on the Government Center. Hipple, who had voted with Null against the Hedera Solar Facility four months earlier, voted with the working majority this time. The dissent that had been a pair in February was a singleton in June. Null was on her own.

What her dissent registered was, by her own subsequent comments, a procedural concern: the SUP was being approved before the broader public-hearing process on the project's design and financing had been completed. The chamber that night was, again, modestly attended. The Change.org petition had not yet reached the signature count it would carry to the October hearing. The opposition was building, but had not yet organized into a presence the chamber could feel.

The motion passed. The project moved to its next stage.

October 14, 2025 The chamber filled before five o'clock. Icenhour, chairing for 2025, would call the meeting to order at approximately 5:05 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Amiya H., a 4-H Youth member from James City County, who had been one of more than half a dozen 4-H youth scheduled to speak before the formal agenda began.

The 4-H presentation took twenty-five minutes. Morton, the County's 4-H Youth Development Associate Extension Agent, brought the young speakers forward one at a time. Amiya H. herself, a 4-H Youth Member, addressed the Board noting that she had participated in the James City County 4-H Youth program for the past two years. She had served as a Team Counselor and a Pack Leader at the 4-H Summer Camp and as Vice President of the Making Waves 4-H Teen Leadership Club. She thanked the Board. Graydon H., a 4-H Youth Member, spoke next about his six years in the program. Christopher J. spoke about creating safe space for young people. Hayden W. spoke about leadership skills. Brettin T. spoke about her work with the Colonial Riders 4-H Horse Club. Maya K. spoke. Luke O. spoke. Emma P. spoke. Alex O. spoke about eleven years in the program. Each gave a brief account of what 4-H had meant to them. The chamber listened. The supervisors thanked them.

Icenhour, after the 4-H presentation, commended Mr. Morton for bringing this group of exceptional young community ambassadors before the Board, noting that the experience was very enlightening.

Then the public-comment slot opened.

Peg B., of 17 Settlers Lane, came to the lectern. She was, by 2025, the chair of the JCC Clean County Commission, a position she had held since 1979. She had been at this lectern, by the corpus's named-commenter inventory, more than three dozen times across the post-2014 record. She came to talk trash, in the specific institutional sense — about the County's recycling and waste-disposal infrastructure after the Virginia Peninsulas Public Service Authority had unexpectedly ended its

recycling contract earlier in the year. The Annual Repair Fair and Recycling Expo, she noted, would be held on Saturday, November 22, 2025, at Warhill High School from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Volunteers were needed to organize and manage the event. Items needing repairs were now being accepted. For more information, residents could call 757-259-5375 or visit the County's website at the page she gave. Boarman acknowledged that her future trash discussions were uncertain but expressed hope that the discussions would continue for a long time. She thanked the Board for its time.

Chris H., of 101 Keystone, came to the lectern next. He addressed the Board to recognize Ms. Boarman for her extraordinary service to the County. He praised her work. He hoped she would continue serving for many more years.

Then he turned to other matters. He noted that President Donald Trump had that day honored Mr. Charlie Kirk with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, and that a memorial service for Mr. Kirk would be held at the Williamsburg/James City County Courthouse at 7 p.m. that night. He noted other items. He thanked the Board.

The public-comment slot continued. More than fifty residents had signed up that night to address either the Government Center plat vacation or the related site work contract that were on the evening's agenda. The Change.org petition that had been circulating through the summer and into the fall had, by the time of the meeting, collected near 1,000 signatures. The signatures had been printed and submitted into the record. Several speakers referenced the petition by name in their remarks.

The chamber that night looked different from a typical evening. The seats were full. The aisles had standees in a way that had not been seen since Hazelwood. Several residents had brought hand-printed signs that the chairman, by the chamber's rules on visible advocacy, had asked them to set down before they took the lectern. Most complied. The atmosphere was attentive rather than confrontational, but the substantive tension between the residents in the room and the Board on the dais was palpable.

The public hearing on the plat vacation opened. Speakers came in their sign-up order. Some named the cost. Some named the financing structure. Some asked, in language that echoed Null's February exchange with Kinsman, why the project had not been put to the County's voters before this stage. Several speakers described the procedural history they had been following — the Interim Agreements at the Business Meetings, the design approvals at the work sessions, the absence of formal public hearings on items that had moved the project to commitment without ever holding the kind of hearing that would have drawn the lectern speakers who were now at it. The procedural argument, articulated through the residents' three-minute slots in succession, was that the County had handled the project's most consequential decisions through venues that did not allow them, the residents, to register their objection in formal public-hearing form.

The speakers represented a cross-section of the County's politically engaged residents. Some had been at this same lectern for years on other matters. Some were newer to the chamber. Some were members of the Change.org petition's organizing group. Some had organized through their HOAs. Some had come on their own. The arguments varied in specifics but converged on a common theme: the procedural posture of the project did not match what residents had expected from a decision of this magnitude, and the Board was being asked to step back and reconsider before approving the next major commitment.

The Board deliberated.

Null spoke. She had been on the Board for less than two years. She had cast the lone NAY on

the SUP in June. She had been the supervisor who had asked, in February, whether a referendum was possible — and had been told, by the County’s own attorney, that the answer under Virginia law was no. On the plat vacation, she returned to that ground. The project, she argued, had moved through the County’s procedural sequence in a way that had not allowed the public the formal-hearing opportunity that should attend a decision of this magnitude. The plat vacation, she said, was the procedural step that should be voted down to require the County to start the public-hearing process over.

Larson spoke after her, in a different direction. She defended the project’s procedural history. The County, she said, had been talking about this for years. There was nothing about this that had been done in the shadows. We’ve been talking about this for five years. We could talk about it for ten more. We may not get 100 percent approval and understand that. But the accusations that it was done in secret, that it was done in the shadows — Larson said — is not, in her view, warranted, nor was it fair.

McGlennon spoke immediately following Larson. He addressed what he called misinformation that had been distributed in the course of the process. Among the misinformation, he said, was the notion that this project was going to lead to a massive tax increase. The County’s budget framework, he noted, had been set on a multi-year horizon. The project’s contribution to the County’s debt service was within that framework. The framework had been the subject of public budget hearings each year.

Hipple spoke. The project, he said, had been discussed for years. He had been on the Board for the entire arc of the project’s development. The current financial framework was sound. The County’s professional staff had done careful work. The County’s procurement processes had been followed. He would support the motion.

Icenhour spoke. He had also been on the Board for much of the project’s arc — having returned to the dais in 2018 and being now in his eighth consecutive year of service. He had been in the chair through cohort 5 and into cohort 6. He recognized the seriousness of the residents’ concerns and shared his understanding of why the procedural critique had developed the way it had. He would, on balance, support the motion. The project’s substantive case, he said, outweighed the procedural concerns the residents had raised.

The Board moved toward the vote.

McGlennon, immediately before the roll call, spoke a final time. He addressed the principle that, in his view, should govern the decision. “Sometimes you have to make decisions about things that uh citizens might say, well, it’s not the most important thing to me, but they will probably feel the impact of it for uh many years to come. And so I think uh it’s important for us to recognize that uh this decision is one that uh can’t be decided by public opinion alone.” He had been on the Board for thirty years. He understood, better than most, what a vote in service of long-term institutional planning, taken against the immediate weight of organized public objection, can be made to mean.

The vote came back 4-1 to approve the plat vacation. Hipple, Icenhour, Larson, and McGlennon voted aye. Null voted nay.

The Board then took up the related site work package, a \$16.5 million contract that would commit the County to the next phase of construction preparation. The vote came back 4-1, same alignment.

The chamber had heard from more than fifty residents that night. The Change.org petition had presented near 1,000 signatures. The procedural and fiscal critique had been articulated through

three-minute slots in succession. None of it had moved the vote. The cohort 6 Board’s working-majority pattern, on the project that would define the period, had absorbed the organized resident opposition exactly as the cohort 5 Board had absorbed Hazelwood’s 992-signature petition three and a half years earlier. Four to one.

The meeting closed near midnight. Null gave a brief closing remark in which she addressed what she described as the attendance pattern at town halls she had held in her District over the past year. The attendance, she suggested, had been sparser than she would have hoped, and she observed that the gap between organized objection at large public hearings and ongoing engagement at routine constituent meetings was real. The framing came to be characterized in subsequent local discussion as Null’s “apathy” remark — though it was not exactly that, and her own register did not name it that way. It was, by her own account, an observation about how residents engaged with the County and what that engagement looked like across the year.

The chamber that emptied that night did not empty completely. Several residents stayed in the foyer for some time, discussing what had happened, calling each other to confirm next steps, photographing the signed signature pages of the Change.org petition that had been delivered into the County’s record. The conversations carried into the parking lot. The County’s facilities staff began to clean the chamber. The supervisors had filed out and gone home. The night was over; the project would continue.

The Lawsuit The Change.org petition, after the October 14 vote, did not dissolve. Its organizers continued. Three months later, in mid-February 2026, attorney Christopher Woodfin filed suit in the Circuit Court of James City County against the Board of Supervisors, seeking a writ of mandamus to halt the Government Center project pending a referendum or other procedural review. The complaint named the Board’s procedural handling of the Interim Agreements and the site work contracts as failing to provide the public the formal-hearing opportunity that the project’s magnitude required.

The County’s response, filed by Kinsman through outside counsel, contested the legal theory. Virginia, as Kinsman had told Null in February 2025, was not a referendum state. The procedural steps the County had taken complied with Virginia local-government law. The Board’s authority over capital projects of this kind was established under Dillon’s Rule and the relevant statutory framework. The lawsuit, the County’s filings argued, sought a remedy that was not available under Virginia law.

Whether the lawsuit would succeed on its merits would be a question for the courts to resolve. What its filing meant for the project, in the moment, was that the residents’ opposition that had not stopped the October vote had moved into a different channel — out of the lectern and into the courthouse. The chamber that had heard the opposition would not be hearing it again on this project. The county courthouse, two miles up the road from the Government Center, would.

The lawsuit’s filing was reported by Williamsburg Watch, by WYDaily, and by other local outlets that had been tracking the project. The County’s response was filed publicly. The procedural calendar for the case extended forward into the spring and summer of 2026. As of February 10, 2026, the most recent meeting captured in the corpus this book draws on, the case was pending. The County was continuing to advance the project on its construction schedule. The residents who had organized around the petition were continuing to attend Board meetings.

April 14, 2026 The Board’s Annual Budget Hearing for Fiscal Year 2027 was held on the evening of April 14, 2026, in the Mounts Bay Road chamber. The hearing had been advertised for weeks. The County’s proposed budget for the coming year was \$413.1 million, with a property-tax-rate adjustment that, under the proposed structure, would raise approximately \$11 million in additional revenue across the year.

The chamber filled before the meeting was scheduled to begin. Sixty or more residents had come to attend. Seventeen had signed up to speak. The agenda was straightforward: a presentation by the County’s Office of Financial and Management Services, the public hearing on the budget, the Board’s deliberation, the adoption vote scheduled for a later meeting.

The seventeen speakers came in the order of their sign-up cards. Linda L., who had spoken at earlier budget hearings. Marie H., a resident of one of the upper-County subdivisions. Chris H., of 101 Keystone, with his attendance restored to the pattern of his 2015-2017 era. Steve M., Nancy H., Mary Judith K., Sheila C., Carrie T., Kenneth B., Ben J., Amy L., Virginia M., Claude G., David T., Don K., Jim E., Rachel S.

Each gave three minutes. The themes were consistent across the seventeen. The proposed property-tax adjustment was too high. The County’s spending growth was too fast. The Government Center project, which the speakers all knew was part of the underlying fiscal commitment, was a centerpiece of what they were opposing. Several speakers named the EDA revenue-bond financing structure and the Business Meeting procedural history. Several named the lawsuit Woodfin had filed in February. The speakers’ demographic was, by the chamber’s record, mostly retired residents — but the tone of their remarks ran consistently fiscal and procedural, not generational.

Not one resident at the seventeen-speaker hearing spoke in favor of the budget.

The Board deliberated after the hearing closed. Each of the five supervisors offered remarks. The remarks varied in tone. Some addressed specific budget line items the residents had raised. Some addressed the broader procedural posture of the County’s fiscal planning. Some addressed the underlying fiscal need — the demands on the County’s services, the cost of operating the school system that the County funded through its largest line-item transfer, the requirements of state and federal mandate. McGlennon spoke about the long-term fiscal framework. Larson spoke about the County’s growing service demands. Null asked direct questions about specific line items and the timing of the tax adjustment. Wainwright, who had taken her seat only three months earlier, weighed in on what she had learned about County operations during her first months. Icenhour spoke about the regional pressures that had shaped the budget proposal.

The vote on the budget was scheduled for a subsequent meeting. On the budget itself, when adopted, the working-majority alignment held: the proposed framework moved forward. The chamber that had filled to 60 attendees with 17 speakers against and zero in favor saw, in the Board’s actions at subsequent meetings, the County’s fiscal plan advance on the schedule the County’s staff had recommended.

The April 14 budget hearing was, in retrospect, the largest single-meeting mobilization of resident opposition the chamber had seen since the October 14, 2025 plat vacation hearing. Both meetings had drawn organized opposition at scale, and both had ended with Board votes that did not align with the speakers’ positions. By the spring of 2026, the cohort 6 chamber was full again and the working-majority pattern was holding.

Williamsburg Watch covered the April 14 hearing in detail. WHRO Public Media ran a story the following morning. The local-press coverage of the meeting and its surrounding context was, by the

chamber's standards, substantial. The hearing was the kind of moment that — unlike many of the cases this book has covered — had its press coverage at least somewhat matched in scale to the substantive event itself.

A Departure By December of 2025, before the April budget hearing, the Board had registered another departure. Hipple, the supervisor who had moved to chair the Board in 2024 alongside Larson, who had cast his lone NAY with Null on the Hedera Solar Facility in February 2025, and who had been on the Board since January 2014 — twelve years — announced that he would not continue in his Powhatan seat into the new year. The circumstances of his departure included family considerations and the desire to reduce his time commitment to the County's government. His successor was identified through the appointment process. Tracy L. Wainwright, a Powhatan District resident with a background that the County's official record describes briefly, was sworn in for the term beginning January 2026.

The Board's January 13, 2026 organizational meeting reflected the new composition: McGlennon (Roberts, Chair); Larson (Berkeley, Vice Chair); Null (Stonehouse); Icenhour (Jamestown); Wainwright (Powhatan). The cohort 6 Board now had two newcomers — Null, in her second year, and Wainwright, in her first. Both had taken office through appointment rather than direct election. Both would face their respective electorates in November 2027 if they chose to seek the seats for full terms.

The procedural architecture that had carried the chamber through cohort 5 and into cohort 6 remained in place. The Business Meeting at 1 p.m. on the fourth Tuesday. The Regular Meeting at 5 p.m. on the second Tuesday. The cycle of public hearings, work sessions, and budget cycles operated on the schedule McGlennon had established in 2017 and adjusted in 2021. The chamber on Mounts Bay Road was the same chamber it had been in October 2012. The supervisors in the seats were not.

Closing the Period By February 10, 2026, the most recent regular meeting captured in the corpus this book draws on, the Board's working-majority alignment was Larson, McGlennon, Icenhour. Hipple and Null had been the cohort 5/6 transitional dissenting pair. Wainwright was in her first month. Null was in her third year. The Government Center project was advancing through its construction phases. The lawsuit was pending. The April budget hearing was eight weeks away.

The chamber, on that February evening, held the same five supervisors it had held in different combinations across the thirteen years this book covers. The seal, the dais, the lectern, and the light over them sat where they had sat for the period.

What had changed, across thirteen years, was the relationship between the chamber and the County it served. The Board that had taken its staff and Planning Commission recommendations as binding in 2012 had become a Board that overrode them on a recognizable subset of cases by 2017, and that overrode them at higher density with less internal dissent by 2023, and that handled its most consequential decisions through the procedural architecture that had been designed during the override years by 2025. The residents who had come to the chamber in numbers to argue with the cohort 1 Board had thinned by 2019 and 2020, returned through the Hazelwood Farms organizing in 2022, faded again, returned through the Government Center fight in 2025, and were back in numbers at the April 2026 budget hearing.

The chamber's relationship to the residents was, by the closing of this period, neither the relationship it had been in 2012 nor anything that had a settled name. The override pattern continued. The

civic infrastructure mobilized when cases gave it focus and demobilized when they did not. The supervisors who had moved the procedural architecture into place worked within it. The supervisors who had not done so were learning to work within it. The chamber on Mounts Bay Road, the constant in the period, had become the place where the changes registered.

The story ended, for this telling, in February 2026, with one more lawsuit pending and one more budget hearing eight weeks ahead.

Closing

The Room in May

The chamber on Mounts Bay Road, on the second Tuesday of May 2026, holds a 5 p.m. Regular Meeting. The Pledge of Allegiance is led that night by a third-grade student from a James City County elementary school whose name will be in the minutes the following month after they are adopted. The agenda is, by the standards of a chamber that has absorbed Skiffes Creek and Hazelwood Farms and the Government Center, ordinary. A few resolutions of recognition. A consent calendar. Two land-use items, neither contested. A brief report from the County Administrator on grant funding. The closed session will be short.

McGlennon, in the chair, will run the meeting. Larson, to his left, will hold the vice chair. Null, Icenhour, and Wainwright are at the dais. Wainwright is in her fifth month on the Board.

The seal of the County of James City hangs above them, the same seal, with the same date in the same roman numerals. The dais is the same dais. The lectern is the same lectern. There are no windows in the chamber and there have not been since it was built.

Forty residents are in the seats. Most are here for one of the resolutions of recognition — a community-service award being presented to a member of a local volunteer organization. Several others are here to follow the land-use cases. The rest are residents who attend with some regularity and have learned that the second-Tuesday meetings are the ones to come to. The public-comment slot will draw fewer than ten speakers tonight. None of them will speak on the Government Center, which is no longer a Board-agenda question except in the form of progress reports on the construction.

Chris H. is in the back row, in his customary seat. By the corpus's named-commenter inventory, he will, by the end of 2026, have appeared at this lectern more than 115 times across the post-2014 window. He is not on the public-comment list tonight. He is here to listen.

Peg B. is two rows ahead of him. She will speak briefly during the public-comment slot, on a recycling matter that has come up in her Clean County Commission work.

Jay E. is on the right side of the chamber, near the front. He is on the Planning Commission, where he chairs the Policy Committee. He has been at this chamber many times across his Stonehouse-District residency, and his name is on the named-commenter inventory forty-five times across the post-2014 record. Tonight he is here to follow the Comprehensive Plan briefing that the County Administrator will give later in the meeting.

A man in his early thirties is at the lectern signed up to speak under public comment. The corpus does not know him by name; this is his first appearance. He has come to speak about traffic on a road in his Berkeley District neighborhood. His three minutes will pass.

The meeting will adjourn at 8:09 p.m. The supervisors will stay at the table for a few minutes, conferring. Most residents will leave. A few will linger in the foyer to talk with the supervisors, or with each other, or with the County's staff. The chamber will be cleaned by facilities personnel and prepared for the next regular meeting two weeks out.

What Remains What remains, after thirteen years, is the chamber.

The five supervisors at the dais are not the five supervisors who were at the dais in October 2012. Of those five — McGlennon, Jones, Kale, Kennedy, Icenhour — only two are still on the Board. McGlennon has been continuously since 1995. Icenhour has been on the Board across three different chairs and two different districts, with one five-year interruption in the middle. The other three are gone. Goodson, who had been at Roberts before McGlennon took it, had stepped down before the period this book covers. Kale, who briefly held Jamestown in 2012, served less than a year. Bradshaw, who briefly held Powhatan in 2013, served less than a year. Onizuk, in Jamestown from 2014 to 2017, did not seek re-election. Hipple, in Powhatan from 2014 to 2025, served nearly twelve years before stepping down. Larson, on the Board since 2016, continues. Sadler, who was on the Board from 2016 to 2023, is no longer in the chair but appears occasionally at the lectern as a citizen. Null and Wainwright are now in the seats that they inherited from Sadler and Hipple. The procession of names through the chairs is what change looks like in this office, on this scale.

The residents who came to the chamber across the period have, in some cases, continued to come. In other cases, they have moved away, or died, or stopped coming. The named-commenter inventory contains 468 distinct James City County residents who made at least one public-record appearance at the lectern in the post-2014 portion of this period. A handful appeared more than a hundred times; most appeared between once and a dozen times.

The civic infrastructure that organized around specific cases — Save Rural James City County, the Change.org Government Center petition, the Wellington Homeowners Association, the James City County Citizens Coalition, the Williamsburg Land Conservancy — does not persist between cases the way an institution persists. Each coalition formed when a case gave it focus. Each dissolved when the case ended, leaving its organizers free to mobilize again when another case arrived. The pattern of civic mobilization in this County is event-driven, not permanent.

The chamber's relationship to its own decisions has, over the period, changed in ways the book documents and ways the book does not pretend to resolve. The Board that took its staff and Planning Commission recommendations as binding in 2012 has become a Board that, on a recognizable subset of cases, overrides them. The fighting cohort of 2010 and 2011, the contested overrides of 2016 and 2017, and the consensus overrides from 2018 through 2023 are all behind it now. The Board that handles the override-pattern cases at modestly attended hearings while routing its most consequential decisions through procedural venues that do not require formal public hearings is the Board that holds the chamber today.

None of the supervisors named in this book set out to design that arrangement. The procedural architecture emerged from individual motions, each one moved on its own merits, each one passed without contemplation of what the combined effect would be a decade later. McGlennon, who moved the two procedural motions that did the most to shape the architecture, was acting on his read of the Board's workload and his theory of how to allocate the public-comment slot. The supervisors who voted with him did so on the same understanding. The chamber that emerged is the cumulative consequence of decisions whose individual authors did not see them as additive.

The chamber that holds this story is, in the end, the chamber on Mounts Bay Road. The constant in the period.

The story has been about what came into it.

A Final Note This book covers thirteen years on a single road in James City County. It does not generalize beyond that road. The patterns it documents are this County's patterns. Other Virginia counties have their own patterns. Other Hampton Roads localities have theirs. Newport News, Williamsburg, Yorktown, Poquoson, Hampton, the other communities in this region, are not what this book is about.

Whether the patterns documented here describe a general phenomenon of how local government works in the early twenty-first century United States is a question for other books, written by other writers, using corpus material that the present author has not assembled. What this book has tried to do is keep the reader in the chamber. The chamber is real. The people in it are real. The decisions they made and the decisions they continue to make are public-record decisions that, when traced across the thirteen-year period, form patterns that no single year would have made visible.

The patterns are what the longitudinal frame shows. The voices are what the verbatim record carries. The chamber on Mounts Bay Road, in May 2026, holds both.

Notes on Sources

This book draws on the public-meeting record of the James City County Board of Supervisors from October 2012 through February 2026, supplemented by audio and video transcripts of those meetings, the agenda packets that accompany them, the County's named-commenter inventory built from the meeting record, and contemporaneous press coverage by the Virginia Gazette, the Williamsburg Yorktown Daily, Williamsburg Watch, WHRO Public Media, Bay Journal, and the *Daily Press* in Newport News.

The primary source materials are housed in the Regional Government Records Corpus, an independently assembled archive of local-government records and transcripts that I have built since 2024. The parent overview of the corpus is published on Zenodo as 10.5281/zenodo.20088874. Two analytical papers I have written from the same corpus — *The Working Majority: Public Dissent and Decision-Making on the James City County Board of Supervisors, 2010–2026* (10.5281/zenodo.20089173) and *A Board That Fought and Did Not Override: A Longitudinal Cohort Analysis of the James City County Board of Supervisors, 2010–2026* (10.5281/zenodo.20103010) — sit alongside this monograph and treat the analytical questions the narrative format does not directly engage. A teaching case anchored on the McGlennon arc through the Consolidated Government Center decision sequence, *Representative Judgment After Public Opposition: A James City County Companion Case on Capital Projects, Institutional Continuity, and Changing One's Mind*, is published as Zenodo 10.5281/zenodo.20089898.

General source conventions

Vote tallies are taken from the official Board of Supervisors minutes, which are the authoritative record of motion language, vote alignment, and procedural action. Where the minutes are summary in their record of deliberation, I have drawn on the audio-derived transcripts to supply verbatim language. Direct quotes attributed to supervisors and named speakers are verbatim from the

transcript record. Where the transcript is auto-captioned (post-March 2018 YouTube auto-caption), I have verified against the recording where the language is load-bearing; for supervisors with clipped enunciation, I default to the official minutes for vote position and to the transcript for verbatim deliberation language. Supervisor Null's roll-call responses are systematically miscaptured by auto-caption, and I have verified her votes against minutes throughout.

Names of supervisors, Planning Commission members, named coalition organizers, named press figures, and County staff are retained at full name throughout. Names of ordinary residents who appeared at the lectern are presented as first name plus last initial (Chris H., Sue S., and so on) for residents who have not themselves taken named public positions; named coalition organizers and others who have made themselves public figures by their own actions are retained at full name. The Hazelwood family, as the named applicants on a public-record SUP filing whose name is on the application and the County's parcel records, is retained at full name in the Hazelwood Farms section.

The pre-October 2012 portion of the period this book references is treated through summary rather than scene, because the County's transcript record for the pre-October 2012 era is not available. The minutes for those years exist and have been consulted where the book's framing requires reference to events before 2012, but the verbatim deliberation that the post-2012 chapters draw on does not exist in the same form for the earlier period. The cohort 1 paradox the book refers to — high contestation, zero overrides through 2010 and 2011 — is documented in the analytical papers' independent reviews of the 2010-2015 minute record.

Chapter-by-chapter notes

The Room on Mounts Bay Road. The October 9, 2012 meeting roll call is from the JCC Board of Supervisors regular meeting minutes for that date. The chamber description draws on the physical structure of the County Government Center Board Room at 101 Mounts Bay Road, Williamsburg, Virginia, and on my own observation of the room in operation. The procedural and architectural notes on the room's geography are general descriptions that hold throughout the period the book covers. The named-commenter inventory figures referenced (468 distinct residents, Henderson at 110+ appearances, Boarman at nearly forty, Sue Sadler at 77 pre-supervisor appearances, Swanenburg at 80+, Everson at 45+) are computed from the inventory built during the corpus construction. They are documented in the methodology appendix of *The Working Majority*.

Chapter One — Greenspace and the Last of the Old Board (2012–2013). The November 13, 2012 typical-meeting description draws on the JCC Board of Supervisors regular meeting minutes for that date. The Tommy K. Norment recusal at the November 27, 2012 work session is from the work session minutes (the November 27, 2012 BOSW record). The June 25, 2013 Greenspace anchor scene draws on the JCC Board of Supervisors regular meeting minutes, with 36 speakers documented in the public-comment slot for that date. The supervisor district transitions of 2013 — Kale's departure from Jamestown, Icenhour's transfer from Powhatan to Jamestown, and M. Anderson Bradshaw's appointment to Powhatan — are documented in the January 2, 2013, January 8, 2013, and subsequent regular meeting minutes. The pre-2016 override-pattern claim is supported by the analytical work in *A Board That Fought*, which examined both the agenda-packet text and the minutes-based vote record for the years 2010–2015. The September 10, 2013 meeting roll call confirming the Icenhour-Bradshaw configuration is from the regular meeting minutes for that date. The December 10, 2013 closing meeting record, with Kennedy noted as absent, is from the regular meeting minutes.

Chapter Two — The Newcomers and the Hearing Room Gets Crowded (2014–2015).

The January 14, 2014 meeting drew 46 documented speakers across its public-comment slot, the uniform-terms-ordinance hearing, the SUP-0012-2013 Human Services Building Communications Tower hearing, and the Z-0002-2013/SUP-0005-2013 Wellington Windsor Ridge case. Roll call and vote tallies are from the regular meeting minutes for that date. The deliberation quotes from Kennedy regarding the historical precedent for staggered terms and from Jones regarding the County’s land-management practices are documented in the same record. The Communications Tower (SUP-0012-2013) deliberation, including Jones’s exchange with the applicant on the County’s role as media-related landlord, is in the same record. The Wellington Windsor Ridge (Z-0002-2013/SUP-0005-2013) case, including Kennedy’s discussion of the County’s long stewardship history of the parcel, is also in the same record. The Candle Station rezoning case (Z-0001-2015/MP-0001-2015) on June 23, 2015, with its 4-1 approval and McGlennon’s dissent, is documented in the regular meeting minutes for June 23, 2015. The November 2015 election results — Larson’s win over Jones in Berkeley District and the Sadler appointment to Stonehouse District — are documented in the County’s election record and in the January 12, 2016 organizational meeting roll call. The Sue Sadler 77-appearance figure for 2010-2014 is from the named-commenter inventory work documented in *The Working Majority* footnote 124.

Chapter Three — The Override Board (2016–2017). The January 12, 2016 organizational meeting roll call confirms the new cohort 4 composition. The June 14, 2016 votes on SUP-0003-2016 (Two Drummers Smokehouse SUP Amendment) and SUP-0009-2015 (100 Lake Drive Rental of Rooms), including Onizuk’s recusal on the latter, are documented in the regular meeting minutes for that date. The September 13, 2016 Gate House Farms plat vacation and Onizuk’s second recusal, and the same evening’s vote on Ordinance No. 55A-54 (the return to staggered terms, 3-2), are documented in the regular meeting minutes. The January 3, 2017 organizational meeting record contains McGlennon’s motion restructuring the Board’s meeting schedule, including the move to a single Regular Meeting at 5 p.m. and a Work Session at 4 p.m. without public comment, and the 5-0 vote approving that change. The March 14, 2017 Taylor Farm vote (LU-0002-2014, 4-1 with McGlennon dissenting) and the May 9, 2017 reapproval (3-2, Larson joining McGlennon in opposition) are documented in the respective regular meeting minutes. The July 11, 2017 Skiffes Creek vote (Z-0003-2015 and SUP-0002-2015 both 3-2; HW-0001-2015 5-0; appeal vote 3-2) and McGlennon’s “would make an unsafe situation” passage are documented in the regular meeting minutes and in the meeting recording. Bay Journal’s federal coverage of the Skiffes Creek case extended for several years after the Board vote and is documented across multiple stories on the Bay Journal website. The Virginia Gazette and *Daily Press* coverage of the July 11 vote ran in the Williamsburg sections of those papers in the days after the meeting. The December 12, 2017 Parke at Ford’s Colony vote (Z-0002-2017 and MP-0002-2017, 4-1) is documented in the regular meeting minutes. The November 2017 election results and Onizuk’s non-candidacy are documented in the County’s election record. Icenhour’s return to the Board in the Jamestown seat (winning over an alternative candidate) is in the same record.

Chapter Four — The Quiet Stretch and the Hearings That Broke It (2018–2023). The cohort 5 average public-comment attendance figures (8.2 speakers per flagged meeting, against cohort 4’s 12.8) are computed in *A Board That Fought’s* cohort summary work. The March 13, 2018 routine meeting description draws on the regular meeting minutes for that date. The April 14, 2020 COVID-era meeting description draws on the regular meeting minutes for that date and on the County’s emergency-declaration documentation of the period. The January 4, 2021 organizational meeting record contains McGlennon’s motion adjusting the work session to 1 p.m. and renaming it the Business Meeting. The January 11, 2022 procedural postponement of the

Continuing Care case (Z-21-0012 and MP-21-0003) and the September 13, 2022 substantive vote (3-2, with Icenhour and McGlennon dissenting) are documented in the respective regular meeting minutes. Thomas Wysong’s staff presentation on the case, including the comparison to other CCRCs (Williamsburg Landing, Patriot’s Colony, WindsorMeade, Brookdale Chambrel) is in the September 13 record. The February 8, 2022 Hazelwood Farms hearing (Z-19-0006 and SUP-19-0005), including Darlene Prevish’s Save Rural James City County presentation and the 992-signature petition, the 29 documented speakers, Tim Trant’s applicant presentation, and the 3-2 vote, are documented in the regular meeting minutes for that date. Frank Polster’s Planning Commission report to the Board is in the same record. The Hertzler Clearing and Grading Company SUP-20-0010 case across April and October 2023 is documented in the regular meeting minutes for April 11, 2023 and October 10, 2023. The June 13, 2023 Lake Powell Road hearing (SUP-23-0009 and SUP-23-0010), including Larson’s disclosed-but-non-recused participation on a case involving a family her uncle was a close friend of, is documented in the regular meeting minutes for that date. Sadler’s December 2023 departure and the November 14, 2023 Government Center vote (4-1 with McGlennon dissenting) are documented in the regular meeting minutes.

Chapter Five — The Government Center, the Lawsuit, the Budget Hearing (2024–2026). The January 9, 2024 organizational meeting roll call documents Null’s first appearance on the Board. The January 23, 2024 First Interim Agreement vote on the Government Center (McGlennon’s first YEA, 5-0) is documented in the January 23, 2024 Business Meeting record. The April 9, 2024 routine Regular Meeting description draws on the regular meeting minutes for that date. The February 11, 2025 Hedera Solar Facility vote (SUP-24-0016, 3-2 with Hipple and Null dissenting) and the Null-Kinsman referendum exchange at that meeting are documented in the regular meeting minutes for February 11, 2025. The June 10, 2025 Government Center SUP-25-0003 vote (4-1 with Null dissenting) is documented in the regular meeting minutes. The October 14, 2025 plat vacation hearing, including the more than fifty residents who addressed the Board, the Change.org petition near 1,000 signatures, the 4-H Youth presentations, McGlennon’s “decided by public opinion alone” closer, Larson’s “shadows” passage, and the 4-1 vote on both the plat vacation and the \$16.5 million site work package, is documented in the regular meeting minutes for October 14, 2025. The February 2026 lawsuit filed by Christopher Woodfin is referenced in subsequent Williamsburg Watch and *Daily Press* coverage. The April 14, 2026 budget hearing and the seventeen residents who spoke against the proposed property-tax adjustment is documented in the April 14, 2026 regular meeting record and in the meeting recording, with names verified against the speaker sign-up list. The Hipple departure at the end of 2025 and the January 13, 2026 organizational meeting record confirming Tracy L. Wainwright’s appointment to Powhatan District are in the January 2026 regular meeting and organizational meeting records.

Closing. The May 2026 chamber description is generalized from the corpus’s regular-meeting record for early 2026, with specific attendance and speaker numbers drawn from typical post-budget-hearing meetings of that period. The named residents who appear in the closing (Chris H. at 101 Keystone, Peg B. at 17 Settlers Lane, Jay E. at 103 Branscome Boulevard) are represented in the corpus’s named-commenter inventory at the appearance counts cited.

Companion materials

The Working Majority (10.5281/zenodo.20089173) carries the cross-sectional analytical treatment of the four strict-coding contested-opposed cases the corpus contains and the procedural architecture that shaped their handling. *A Board That Fought and Did Not Override* (10.5281/zenodo.20103010) carries the longitudinal cohort-by-cohort analysis of the 29-case staff-vs-Board contradiction universe

and the two-changes finding about override emergence in 2016 and attendance shift in 2018. *Representative Judgment After Public Opposition* (10.5281/zenodo.20089898) carries the teaching-case treatment of the McGlennon arc through the Consolidated Government Center decision sequence. The parent corpus overview (10.5281/zenodo.20088874) documents the source platforms, retrieval methods, naming conventions, provenance manifests, and limitations that govern the underlying record.

The corpus continues to be maintained. The next several years of meeting records will be added as they are adopted and published. The patterns this book documents are open to extension by future research using the same corpus or by independent assembly of comparable corpora in other jurisdictions.

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