



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

L. Preston Bryant, Jr.
Secretary of Natural Resources

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October 10, 2007

Mr. James B. Donati, Jr.
Henrico County Board of Supervisors
Post Office Box 27032
Richmond, V 23273 Virginia 23228

RE: Redevelopment of Tree Hill Farm, Henrico County

Dear Mr. Donati:

I am pleased to write as Virginia's State Historic Preservation Officer to make you aware of the comprehensive preservation planning work that has helped to shape the Tree Hill Farm redevelopment project to date.

It must be said that while we would certainly have welcomed the retention of Tree Hill Farm as a rural landscape at Richmond's east end, we recognize the property's prime location and local expectations for the area make it a very attractive candidate for growth. We also recognize that with care and sensitivity, development and good heritage stewardship can go hand and hand.

Against that background, I want to commend the GrayCo team for the impressive and unprecedented degree to which they have been willing to work with this Department voluntarily to identify, recognize, and plan for the preservation of the most significant historic resources of Tree Hill Farm. Moreover, the team's approach to these resources is not as relics of the past, but as community assets to be integrated into Tree Hill's future as living and central aspects of that future.

Toward these ends, the team listened to our concerns and those of the larger public, and has worked creatively to address issues through major commitments to preservation while planning for the property's development. These commitments include: the preservation and adaptive reuse of the manor house and its dependencies; the preservation and reuse of the tile barn and other agriculture resources; the preservation of the "Surrender Tree;" the preservation of the cultural remains of the prehistoric occupancy site on the land; and the recovery of as much information as possible from other archaeological sites in partnership with this Department. The project also will

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involve retention of open space and recreational opportunities, including public, not just resident, access to the James River.

Even among this list of important commitments, special note must be given to the developers' generous willingness to set aside the site believed to be Powhatan Town (or Powhatan's Tower), the birthplace of Paramount Chief Powhatan, and dedicate it for use as a cultural showcase and gathering place for Virginia Indians. Powhatan Town, which was then under the leadership of Powhatan's son Parahunt, is among the locations visited by John Smith during his first exploration of the James in 1607. It is particularly culturally significant to Virginia Indians. Thus, a dialogue with leaders of the Virginia Indian community has been established to set the course for the treatment, interpretation and development of the site. Amid all the attention attendant to the 400th anniversary commemoration of Jamestown, the Virginia Indian community has stated that it considers the commitments made by GrayCo to be the most important and lasting gift of 2007 to their community and their future.

For all these reasons, the Department will be pleased to work with GrayCo in the years ahead to ensure the realization of the full benefits of the preservation opportunities that have been made possible by the company's generosity, thoughtful approach, and stewardship philosophy. We believe the public will be well-served by the commitments that have been made by GrayCo to preserve aspects of Tree Hill's special architectural, historic, archaeological and scenic qualities, to share them with the public, and to plan for their future in a way that will give identity and character to Tree Hill even as its use is changed.

Sincerely,



Kathleen S. Kilpatrick
Director & SHPO