

On April 18th, over 40 Rarity Bay residents met at the CAC with newly elected State Rep. Lowell Russell and Loudon County Mayor Buddy Bradshaw. The purpose of this meeting was to hear from them about legislation and issues they are working on that affect our community, and to allow residents to give them feedback about these issues and others that residents think are important. Here is a summary of the key issues that were discussed.

1. Illegal Immigration, including such aspects as sanctuary cities, "catch and release", and various forms of aid to undocumented aliens in Tennessee.
2. E-Verify, the process by which businesses in Tennessee with more than 25 employees are required to verify the immigration status of new hires. There is a growing effort to expand the requirement to all businesses.
3. The "Give Act" - new legislation intended to expand access the vocational and technical training for Tennessee students.
4. The placement of an Intermediate Care Mental Health facility in the Knoxville area (currently patients can only be held for 72 hours, because the closest Intermediate Care Mental Health facilities are in Chattanooga and Memphis). A number of the attendees felt the \$15 million proposed for mental health services should be increased.
5. Distracted Drivers - legislation that will require hands free phone use in a vehicle goes into effect this summer. Some attendees commented that the \$50 fine for a violation should be higher.
6. Heart Beat or "Trigger Bills" - legislation that would ban abortion in Tennessee in most circumstances. Rep. Russell supports these bills.
7. School Vouchers - legislation that would provide funding for vouchers that would allow students to choose schools other than those within their regular school district.
8. Residents asked for help from the speakers to get TDOT to complete repair of the sink hole along Route 72 just north of the entrance to Rarity Bay before it gets any larger.
9. Legislation was discussed that would require all drivers to turn on their headlights 24/7 (as is now the case for motorcycles).
10. A resident brought up the need for more study about the risks of the new utility Smart meters with regard to hacking and invasion of privacy.

11. A resident brought up the previous attempts by the Legislature to allow local jurisdictions to acquire a property for non-payment of taxes and then resell the property with deed restrictions removed (a potential risk for Rarity Bay).

Residents who attended found the meeting to be very informative and productive. Residents who need more information about any of these issues, or who wish to make their own positions known should contact Rep. Russell or Mayor Bradshaw directly. The hope was expressed that a similar meeting could be scheduled in about 6 months.