

Thank you. I'm Paul Butare, LI resident, and Lady's Island Business and Professional (LIBPA) representative, and LI Community Preservation Committee member.

I understand that there is an opportunity in front of the Beaufort County Open Land Trust, and possibly County Council in the near future. The potential opportunity is for purchase of 10 acres at Whitehall for a public park.

It's commonly recognized that Whitehall is a gem for the community with its vistas of Beaufort Waterfront park, and the views across the water **from** the Waterfront Park.

Since the tremendous visionary Henry Chambers was honored today, it's appropriate to think of how difficult it must have been for him to convince people to dedicate public funds for a park, to bring in tens of thousands of yards of fill, and to acquire property to do so.

Today one can scarcely imagine a Beaufort without the Henry Chambers park.

We are faced with a similar opportunity today to execute a vision that will affect Beaufort and Lady's Island for decades to come.

Will this be hard? **Of course** it will be difficult. Will we have to reorder some priorities and funding? Unquestionably.

The truth of the matter is that all priorities are not equal and I believe that Whitehall would rise near the top of priorities.

It is hard to imagine that a Whitehall park would not be among the top few parks in Beaufort and in the County.

There are perhaps differences of opinion on whether this is the best use of scarce funds. And since there has not been an opportunity for public discourse, it is difficult to know how citizens would feel about this.

Decision makers are often faced with difficult decisions and do what is best, **in their view**, for the community. There are few times, when decisions made are irreversible. This is one of those times. There will not be a chance to “do over” the decision, once homes and buildings are built.

Please **give strong consideration** to this proposal and open up the discussion to the public to allow for community input.

I would ask members of the council to project 5 years into the future, sitting on a swing with a loved one and looking across the water. Would you be proud of what you see, or wistful about the **opportunity missed** to preserve the great beauty of Whitehall Plantation.

Thank you for your time.