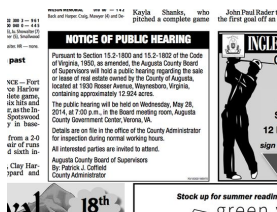


Proposal would drop newspaper notice mandate

Calvin Trice, ctrice@newsleader.com

4:39 p.m. EST December 31, 2014



(Photo: The News Leader)

How do you find out when your city or county government will hold a public hearing about building a new school or about a monster development planned for down the street?

Augusta County leaders think technology has come far enough that local governments shouldn't have to bear the expense of big, wordy newspaper ads.

They'll have backers in the coming session of the General Assembly who have sponsored bills that propose to do away with the public notice mandate or at least diversify the options.

The Virginia Press Association is campaigning against the measures.

The Augusta Board of Supervisors has made the proposal part of its legislative wish list for years. Chairman Larry Wills thinks it's a change that's more than due.

"Society today in general is very computer literate, and we go to websites and electronic media for these types of notices," Wills said. "It's just moving in the direction that technology is going."

Removing the mandate to advertise in newspapers would allow localities to take less time in scheduling public hearings for rezonings, tax increases and the like, Wills added.

Then, there's the expense to local governments.

"The size of the ads that we're required to put in and the detail that have to go into these ads – it's a large charge when you look at what we spend over a year's time with our rezonings and public hearings," Wills said.

A bill sponsored by Del. Richard P. "Dickie" Bell, R-Staunton, would replace the newspaper ad mandate with another that would allow cities and counties to choose two of five publication options, including newspapers, broadcast or electronic means.

Another bill sponsored by Del. Christopher T. Head, R-Botetourt, would allow cities and counties with populations of 50,000 or more to meet notice requirements through websites, radio or television instead of newspapers.

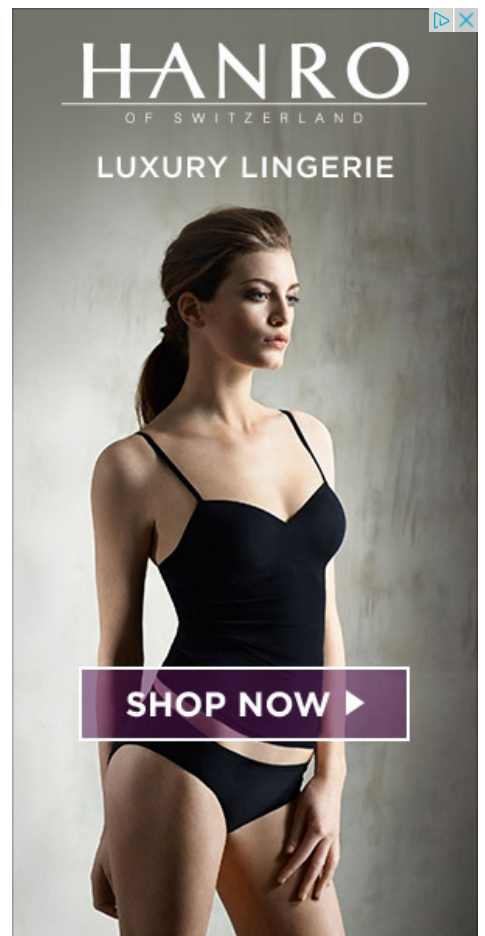
Roger Watson, publisher of The News Leader, believes the state shouldn't drop the print ad requirement. Many citizens who follow their local governments aren't ready for that change, Watson said.

"The people in Virginia still depend on newspapers as a primary source of information, especially in many of the rural areas," he said. "To eliminate that particular notice and just put it online is to take a lot of people out of the mix."

The Virginia Press Association has lobbied against similar proposals in successive General Assembly sessions. As part of its effort, the organization set up a website linking the online public notices for newspapers around the state.

<http://www.vpa.net/statewide-public-notices> (<http://www.vpa.net/statewide-public-notices>)

Read or Share this story: <http://www.newsleader.com/story/news/local/2014/12/31/proposal-drop-newspaper-notice-mandate/21120459/>



MORE STORIES



5 things you need to know

Thursday

[\(/story/news/2015/01/08/five-things-to-know-thursday/21349661/\)](/story/news/2015/01/08/five-things-to-know-thursday/21349661/)
Jan. 8, 2015, 6:58 a.m.



Lyndhurst man guilty of child neglect

[\(/story/news/local/2015/01/06/lyndhurst-man-guilty-child-neglect/21358373/\)](/story/news/local/2015/01/06/lyndhurst-man-guilty-child-neglect/21358373/)
[\(/story/news/local/2015/01/06/lyndhurst-man-guilty-child-neglect/21358373/\)](/story/news/local/2015/01/06/lyndhurst-man-guilty-child-neglect/21358373/)
Jan. 6, 2015, 6:40 p.m.



Staunton PD: Teen pinned cop with SUV

[\(/story/news/local/2015/01/06/staunton-](/story/news/local/2015/01/06/staunton-pd-teen-)
[pd-teen-](/story/news/local/2015/01/06/staunton-pd-teen-)

[pinned-cop-suv/21335979/](#)
[\(/story/news/local/2015/01/06/staunton-pd-teen-pinned-cop-suv/21335979/\)](#)
Jan. 7, 2015, 3:06 p.m.

