

## **Henderson County Commissioners' free market plan won't work**

**To the Editor:** Henderson County's Commissioners are getting close to approving the draft 2045 Comprehensive Plan, which will guide growth over the next 20+ years. Unfortunately, they continue to remove the recommendations that would set parameters to protect what we have. Their plan: allow the free market to run its course.

If we let the free market guide development, we lose sight of the values that open land provides. The market chooses the one-time profit of the 'developer,' but does not value land for its contribution to the environment, tourism, or food production. Also, the market does not take into account the future tax burdens we all pay, for services needed by new developments.

To protect different kinds of land values, and the long-term public interest, we need to adopt measures that complement the market, using all the tools available. Our policymakers need to demonstrate strong leadership, explore a myriad of tools, and create new programs and policies; because once our forests and fields are transformed to support the built environment, we can't get them back.

Planning is a wonderful tool, but it will only work when residents, planners and policymakers work together to produce tangible results. A free market plan won't work.

*Katie Breckheimer, Saluda*