

## Notes from August 16 Indivisible Rappahannock meeting

### Vashti Jones:

- Importance of conversation – give and listen
- “tough and challenging issues” in the NN
- Only way to talk is to talk to each other
- Torch march affected people: connect to those who would see that and relive fears
- Fear of unknown—been around for centuries. On the surface is a scab but underneath is still infection. We need to rip off scab and see what’s there—the truth
- Lies—are believed from one generation to the next, all through this area.
- People don’t know \*how\* to pull themselves up by the bootstraps because of generations of lies
- “Plantation mindset is still here” “Individuals do not know their value”
- Other “individuals are used to being on top” have fear of being pressed down so strive to stay on top
- Conversations turn on the light and we can see—no longer in the dark: “unmask the unknown”
- “We all share a heritage of being human beings” – only way to learn/know that is to talk to each other
- “Time for us to fulfill what our country is all about”
- People here at meeting because of principle that “all men—and women—are created equal”
- “action shows love” – one person can make a difference.
- Invites you to be part of the conversation, part of the solution”

### Jim Long:

- 40 years a classroom teacher; currently president Northumberland NAACP
- Every program and organization I am associated with is integrated
- “My religion is being kind, being a good person”
- Encourage each one of you – the next meeting you attend, try to find one African American person to go with you
- NAACP goes to court with people, especial young people; goes to the school board meetings; to the sheriff, the state’s attorney; raises money for causes including Free Health Clinic
- NAACP fights for the rights of all people; was founded by Caucasians; only 2 African Americans on original committee
- “Very important that we join together” “people can change with education” and kids can change their parents
- This is a minority district – Biggest problem is housing: still people with no indoor bathrooms. Grant obtained that built 12 new houses in Northumberland—folks who live there have no mortgages; just pay taxes and utilities.
- “We stand up. A lot of people don’t because it doesn’t affect them.”
- “being a good person in life means a lot”
- Join NAACP 😊

## Q&A

- Race Relations in NN?
- Jones: “Some people assume a certain privilege over other people. We have a long way to go to break that down.” Not just race—also come-heres
- Some minority people don’t believe they can survive w/o playing the game b/c they’ve been told so often in so many ways they are not equal
- We have a long way to go for equality, to change the mindset of people on top that they are entitled to stay on top
- Long: going to change people by the way you talk to them and treat them

Audience member Vangie Williams, candidate for VA district 1 2018: emphasizes vital need for conversation

Role of institutions to improve race relations more quickly?

- Jones: Often people with personal issues around race also hold positions of power in these organizations.
- Large corporations and organizations you can influence as consumers. None of these in the Northern Neck. We have small companies used to dealing with people like themselves. So you have to address people in office individually and also speak up and speak out when injustices are done.
- Long: Have to be willing to speak up; there are dangers in complacency
- Jones: \*many\* organizations are helping: churches, foundations. They’re part of the solution. It still comes down to the individual, and you cannot change their minds except one on one.
- “Indivisible means we are one—but we haven’t gotten there yet.”