

Minutes

Northampton County Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee

Work Session

October 25, 2012

This was a regular meeting of the Northampton County Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC) held on Thursday, October 25, 2012, in the County Administration main conference room located at 16404 Courthouse Road in Eastville, Virginia.

Those attending were Chairman Bill Parr, Charles Bell, Richard Drury, Peter Lawrence and Pat Coady. Those absent were Vice-Chairman Bill Payne, Butch Bailey, Billy Moore and David Long.

Also attending were Ava Wise, consultant; and Kay Downing, Administrative Assistant.

The meeting was called to order at 9:25 a.m. and a quorum established.

The minutes of October 18th were approved with one correction to page 1, paragraph 6, to add the words, "retail and value-added", prior to "seafood" in the last line.

Due to the absence of Peter Stith, review of the county zoning maps was postponed. After the Committee reviewed last week's progress as presented by Ms. Wise, discussion was held on observations/assumptions. It was determined that primary data should be fleshed out and that an analysis of population age is needed. Several objectives were mentioned such as the need to increase critical mass population. Assuming that approximately 50 percent of the population is of or near retirement age, economic opportunities/industries should be identified that can capitalize on and increase that demographic. For instance, encourage development of a senior-related continuance care facility that provides independent living options such as single-family dwellings, apartments, etc., plus medical and long-term care facilities using the Solomon's Island or Westminster Canterbury model.

During discussion, Ms. Wise stressed that leadership sight visits and tours are an essential part of intentional economic development. This allows local leaders to see and experience firsthand economic development opportunities and provides a true sense of what development might be based on the experience of other localities. A case in point is when a prior Board was reluctant about allowing a Perdue chicken breeder facility to locate in the Eastville area. However, after the Board visited such a facility in Maryland it was permitted thereby creating additional tax revenue and jobs while creating no adverse environmental impacts.

Other assumptions were discussed related to poverty and education. It was noted that ethnicities are changing within the county based on demographic data. Black population is decreasing while Hispanic population is increasing. The population as a whole is not being educated for employment and life skills. Economic development workforce education training is needed. The lack of economic

opportunities in the county has created a level of disenfranchisement that has become part of the local culture. There is a need to provide training for initial job employment and modern-day job employment using a model like the Mountain Home Career Academies High School in Arkansas. A process of integration is needed to connect the high school to economic development and to fully utilize the Workforce Development Training Center at the Eastern Shore Community College.

It was also noted that 73% of county students now qualify for the free/reduced rate school lunch program. This and other data should be investigated. It was suggested that a 2009 report on Eastern Shore poverty written by Roberta Kellam may provide some pertinent historical data and would be forwarded to the Committee.

Members were encouraged to thoroughly review and be prepared to discuss the Economic Section of the existing comp plan (3.1 through 3.5.5) as part of the CPAC's charge. An assumption is that the last two previously adopted comp plans were written to intentionally inhibit economic development which did occur. At that time previously made assumptions never materialized such as increases in population, traffic, and development.

Returning to original discussion, it was noted that a senior/retirement continuance care community could result in a wealth of expertise benefiting the existing population in obtaining the necessity of experience in employment opportunities.

Adjourn

There being no other business the meeting was adjourned at 11:10 a.m. upon proper motion by Mr. Drury and second by Mr. Lawrence.