

Minutes

Northampton County Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC)

February 9, 2012

This was a regular meeting of the Northampton County Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee held on Thursday, February 9, 2012, in Conference Room 115 located at 16404 Courthouse Road in Eastville, Virginia.

Those present were Chair Bill Parr, Vice-Chair David Long, Butch Bailey, Bill Payne, Billy Moore, Dick Drury and Pat Coady. Absent from the meeting was Peter Lawrence.

Also in attendance was Peter Stith, Long Range Planner for Northampton County.

Initial discussion was about the minutes and the Committee requested that minutes be taken for all meetings. Bill Parr indicated that he needed a partner to help run the Committee, someone to help with the agenda and possibly run meetings if he was absent.

Bill Payne volunteered to help be a project manager. David Long said he will not have the time to commit to continue as vice-chair and he made a motion to nominate Bill Payne as vice-chair. A second was made by Dick Drury. The motion passed unanimously.

Bill Parr led a discussion about economic success, a term he had heard at a Rural Economics Initiative led by Virginia Tech. It was stated that Accomack and Northampton Counties had not achieved economic success. The question was asked "What is economic success?" Mr. Parr said it should be a goal of the Committee to define what economic success is for Northampton County. There was discussion about what would be ideal situation for the County as far as schools, conservation, jobs. It was noted that Spencer Murray is a valuable resource for some of this information. Dick Drury will be talking with Spencer Murray about some figures and will also provide the committee some information on a perfect world scenario for the schools.

Bill Parr led a discussion on the abundant available resources at the State level. He said he talked with Liz Povar, Director of Business Development from the Virginia Economic Development Partnership, and she was thrilled about the idea of defining economic success for Northampton County. Mr. Parr said he has a list of other agencies willing or able to provide technical assistance to the CPAC. He mentioned Bill Shelton from Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), Jeff Keever from the VA Port Authority, and Mary Rae Carter from Rural Economic Development. Mr. Parr stated he was tabling the search for a consultant until after the CPAC has talked with these resources from the state. He also mentions the Urban Land Institute Hampton Roads Chapter and Bob Panek from the local Public Service Authority (PSA).

Discussion continued about how the CPAC would use these resources. Mr. Bailey stated the committee needs to make sure it is going in the right direction the Board wants. It was indicated that the recent clarification of the CPAC charge spells that out.

Bill Payne asked if there were models available for counties like ours. Mr. Parr stated there were many superstars in the state that have turned around their economic situation. Mr. Payne indicated the county leadership needs to have the right mindset. Mr. Parr stated the old Board had a clearly stated goal of not letting anything happen and the momentum for that is still going.

Mr. Parr made a motion to adopt the September 19, 2011 summary of Spencer Murray talking points as a guide to financial, economic and political realities which must be considered in any CPAC determination, in addition to other adopted guided documents. Mr. Payne seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Dick Drury made a motion to create a definition of "sustainable economic success". Billy Moore seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

Discussion continued about contacting Mary Rae Carter to be the first person to invite to meet with the Committee. Pat Coady said she could come in and lay out a road map and tell us who to bring in next. Billy Moore suggested they identify counties like ours that have turned their economic situation around and research them. Mr. Parr stated there was a presentation from Carrol County administrator Gary Larrowe that was put on by the Chamber at the Country Club. It was mentioned the CPAC and Chamber could sponsor an event to have him come and speak in Northampton County.

Pat Coady mentioned a man from the Darden School at Uva who spoke at ESCC and said the best development is your local people, like artisans and craftsmen. Mr. Coady mentioned a rest stop in West Virginia that was like an artisan rest stop with all sorts of different artisan's work for sale. He said it would be good to set up a center like this on the Shore. Mr. Parr asked Mr. Coady to supply a white paper of this so they do not lose the idea, as well as one for the man from Uva. It was suggested the CPAC keep a record of white papers if they come up with different ideas so they can reference them.

Mr. Coady made a motion to develop appropriate ratio between residential and commercial and to examine the personal property tax, and to include as an element of the sustainable economic success definition. Mr. Payne 2nd the motion and it passed unanimously.

Mr. Parr began a discussion of the systemic problem in NHCO and gave an example of from the recent Planning Commission meeting where the applicant was applying for height modifications to build a more expensive house, thus more tax revenue for the county. The Committee discussed some of the comments from the PC meeting that were against the change.

Discussion continued about developing the top goals and priorities of the CPAC and for the members to come up with some priorities for the next meeting. Pat Coady had a couple requests for information from Peter Stith; a map of the conservation lands located in the County and the percent of the mainland in conservation. He also requested the percent of tax base that comes from Agriculture, Aquaculture and Tourism. The committee also requested a map of Nature Conservancy owned lands.

There was discussion about the Stakeholders group for the Comp Plan updated. Mr. Payne asked if they would receive the document from all of these public meetings before the stakeholder group gets it. Mr. Stith indicated the document would be a summary of the public meetings and both the stakeholders group and the CPAC would get the document at the same time. Mr. Payne asked that at the next meeting Sandra Benson explain more about the stakeholder group. There was discussion about the presentation at the public input meetings being slanted. Mr. Coady indicated there will be a website available to send comments and that the Board appointed them to counter balance the process.

Motion was made by Bill Payne to adjourn, 2nd by Butch Bailey. Meeting concluded at 10:50 am.