

Minutes

Northampton County Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee

August 23, 2012

This was a regular meeting of the Northampton County Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC) held on Thursday, August 23, 2012, in the County Administration Complex Main Conference Room in Eastville, Virginia. Those present were Chairman Bill Parr, Vice-Chairman Bill Payne, Pat Coady, Dick Drury, Peter Lawrence and David Long. Absent from the meeting were committee members Butch Bailey, Billy Moore and Charles Bell.

Also in attendance were Sandra Benson Thornton, Director of Planning and Zoning, and Ava Wise.

The meeting was called to order at 9:05 a.m. and a quorum was established. There were no minutes available for review.

Chairman Parr reported that Joe Goode was unavailable that date but that he was working on the presentation of the survey results to the Board of Supervisors scheduled for Monday, August 27, 2012. He stated that all materials associated with the telephone survey would be posted on the county's website for public access.

There was some discussion of the recent article and blog comments about the committee in the Cape Charles Wave, and it was agreed that a press release about the committee's work should be prepared. Bill Payne indicated that he would contact Ted Shockley to request that space be reserved in an upcoming edition of the Eastern Shore News, possibly the next Wednesday edition. Peter Lawrence suggested that Joe Goode look at the Cape Charles Wave article prior to making his presentation on Monday and consider addressing the criticisms in his presentation. Chairman Parr requested that each committee member write three (3) sentences about himself that he can use to introduce them at the Board's work session.

Discussion followed concerning major points that should be covered in such a press release, including:

- Extensive research conducted by the committee on topics relating to economic growth and development, including interviews with community and state leaders with expertise in economic development, community development, and transportation; this point should highlight the committee's trip to Richmond.
- Identification of major issues presenting barriers to economic growth in Northampton County.
- Identification of problems in the adopted comprehensive plan and subsequent zoning that impact the potential for economic prosperity in the county.

The committee then discussed the components of their charge from the Board of Supervisors. Mrs. Thornton pointed out that the current plan sets forth as an implementation strategy the development of an economic development plan, which to date has not been accomplished. Mr. Payne expressed the opinion that the committee has neither the time nor the expertise to complete all the elements in the Board's charge. Mr. Lawrence stated his view that all elements could be done in a general way. Mr.

Coady then reviewed the strategy that he had drafted for completing the committee's full report to the Board.

Chairman Parr then reviewed the tasks that needed to be accomplished prior to the August 27, 2012, presentation, and it was agreed that a press release could not be written before the conclusion of that morning's meeting. Mr. Lawrence noted that the committee's input on the survey questions was based on the committee's research. Mr. Coady expressed his opinion that any defense of the survey should come from Mr. Goode rather than from the committee.

A discussion of major recommendations ensued. It is noted that Mr. Coady was drafting as the discussion progressed. Following are the points discussed:

- Seek assistance from the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) in filling the funded Economic Development Director position.
- Research and study models for governance for the new director, including a model that would call for creation of an economic development commission with a funding mechanism similar to that of the Tourism Commission.

Mrs. Thornton questioned the timing of the recommendations as discussed and advised the committee that Springsted Inc. is currently undertaking a consolidation study involving the Planning & Zoning, Building, and Code Compliance departments with the aim of creating a development department that would be directed by the new economic development staff person. She stated that a job description for the new position would be developed and that it was hoped that an offer would be made by the end of October. Mr. Drury then moved that the committee forward the following recommendation to the Board of Supervisors at their September 11, 2012, regular meeting: *The Board should engage with the Virginia Department of Commerce for assistance in determining the correct model of governance to be utilized in the hiring of an Economic Development Director and the potential establishment of a supporting commission. Further, job descriptions related to the position and staff should be vetted by the VEDP.* The motion was seconded by Mr. Long and carried unanimously. Mrs. Thornton was asked to request that Chairman Parr be placed on the Board agenda for the September regular meeting.

Concerning the upcoming Board meeting the following Monday, Mr. Parr indicated that he would call members Moore and Bell to request that they attend the meeting. Mr. Payne stated that he would call Mr. Bailey.

Discussion of recommendations resumed with the following points made:

- Regional approaches should be pursued, and the staff and commission will need to work with the Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission.

Ms. Wise stated her opinion that a county economic development plan must be completed to ensure meaningful collaboration with other entities. Discussion ensued concerning the possibility of the Board's September work session being devoted to a presentation of the ideal process for economic development planning, and it was suggested that staff from the VEDP be invited to participate. Mrs. Thornton stated that she would ask the County Administrator about scheduling such a presentation.

- With respect to item #6 of their charge, the committee will deliver a preliminary 12-month outline for an Economic Development Plan by the end of September, and the county's new economic development staff/structure should review the committee's outline.

Ms. Wise suggested inviting VEDP to assist them in developing their plan outline.

It was agreed that the committee would finalize their recommendations for inclusion in the September quarterly report at the August 30, 2012, meeting. Mrs. Thornton reminded the committee that they had discussed on August 16, 2012, utilizing the August 30 meeting, and the September 6 meeting if necessary, to conduct a facilitated discussion of their guiding principles in preparation for the anticipated joint meeting with the Planning Commission. Mr. Parr indicated that he had been unable to contact Paul Berge about potential facilitation services; Ms. Wise agreed to facilitate such a discussion at the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Submitted by Sandra Benson Thornton.