

Minutes
Northampton County Planning Commission Work Session
May 18, 2016
16404 Courthouse Road, Eastville, VA
7:00p.m., 2nd Floor Admin. Conference Room

Those present – Jacqueline Chatmon, Dixon Leatherbury, Mark Freeze, Kay Downing, Michael Ward,

Absent – Sylvia Stanley, and David Fauber

Also in attendance was Peter Stith, Long Range Planner, Theresa Adkins, Recording Secretary, Mayor Gibb of Nassawadox, and Town Council of Nassawadox

The meeting was called to order and a quorum was established.

The agenda was reviewed and accepted as presented.

The public hearing was called to order.

Mayor Gibb of Nassawadox called to order and a quorum was established for the Nassawadox Town Council to consider the following text amendment.

Public hearing:

Zoning Text Amendment 2016 - 03: The Nassawadox Town Council filed to amend the Town of Nassawadox Zoning Ordinance as follows:

1. Section 2-3 Specific Definitions Article II Definitions add Tree Removal Service.

Tree Removal Service: A business that provides tree removal services and may also provide a green waste recycling center. The business shall be screened from the view of state maintained roads by permanent opaque screening. This screening may consist of an opaque fence a minimum of 6 feet in height or evergreen plantings which reach a minimum of 8 feet in height at maturity. The business may provide on-site areas for the storage of equipment and materials. A fence shall surround the perimeter of the business.

2. Section 15-3 Special Uses and Structures Article XV “CG” – Commercial General District add tree removal service as a use by special use permit.

(d) Tree removal service (as defined in Section 2-3 Specific Definition).

3. Add Section 26-15 to Article XXVI Supplemental District Regulations.

Section 26-15 Location and Storage of Recreational Vehicles (RV's) and Campers within Residential Zoning Districts: *The location and storage of RV's and campers shall meet the following standards.*

(a) An RV or camper may be stored on a residentially zoned property, but may not be used as a permanent dwelling.

(b) When an RV or camper is being stored it shall be located within the side or rear yards and not project beyond the front of the existing dwelling on the property.

(c) Where no dwelling on the property exists, an RV or camper may be stored and shall be located at a minimum in alignment or behind the front of the dwellings on either side of the property. If no dwelling exists to either side, the RV or camper must at a minimum be placed on the property to meet the required setbacks for the zoning district where it is located.

Ex parte communications

No public comments were offered and the hearing was closed.

After a brief discussion between the Commission and the Town Council the following change was made to Section 26-15 (c) should be revised as follows: *The RV or camper must at a minimum be placed on the property to meet the required setbacks for the zoning district where it is located.*

Action:

A motion was made by Commissioner Ward to recommend Zoning Text Amendment 2016-03 for approval with changes to 26-15 (c). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Leatherbury and carried with all in favor 6-0.

Unfinished business

Staff Report

Petitions: Eastville DRAFT Zoning Text Amendments

To: Planning Commission

From: Peter Stith, AICP
Long Range Planner

Date: May 9, 2016

During the Planning Commission's review of the recent text and map petitions brought forth from the Town of Eastville, several items were of concern to the Commission. Staff has

provided some potential zoning text changes and map amendments to Eastville Zoning Ordinance below.

The first item deals with the rear and side yard setbacks in the CG zone. The current ordinance allows for a reduced side and rear setback if the permitted use abuts a residential district. As written, a side yard setback for a primary setback may be reduced from 50 feet to 25 feet. For an accessory structure the setback may be reduced from 35 feet to 25 feet. It appears this scenario is the opposite for the rear yard setback, where the primary structure may be reduced from 35 feet to 25 feet and the accessory structure may be reduced from 50 feet to 35 feet. Staff's suggestion would be to delete this setback modification all together or increase the setback when a permitted use in the CG district abuts a residential district. See the highlighted section below for the specific text in the ordinance.

**ARTICLE XII
"CG" - COMMERCIAL GENERAL DISTRICT**

Section 12-4 Minimum Area, Lot Size, Lot Width, Setbacks, and Height Requirements:

- (a) Lot Coverage - Lot coverage in "CG" District shall not exceed 60 percent of the area of the lot.
- (b) Minimum Lot Size - None required except as required for in Article XVII herein.
- (c) Minimum Lot Width - One hundred (100) feet.
- (d) Yard Requirements, Minimum Setbacks –

	<u>Primary</u>	<u>Accessory</u>
(1) From US Rt. 13	100'	100'
(2) All Other roads	100'	100'
(3) Rear Yard	35'*	50'*
(4) Side Yard	50'*	35'*

* Except where a permitted use abuts a residential district where the requirement will be twenty-five (25) feet for side yards and thirty-five (35) feet for rear yards.

The second and third issues raised by the Commission involve the following section (12-6), where a maximum setback of 20 feet is required. The Commission had concern because the current map shows all of Willow Oak and Courthouse Rd. where this setback is applied. Staff has provided a zoning map with potential changes/modifications to the Street Oriented map. If the Planning Commission provides a positive recommendation for the rezoning request (ZMA 2016-02), it should consider retaining this modification for those parcels. If the Commission does not want to amend the map, it may consider amending the text in the section below. One

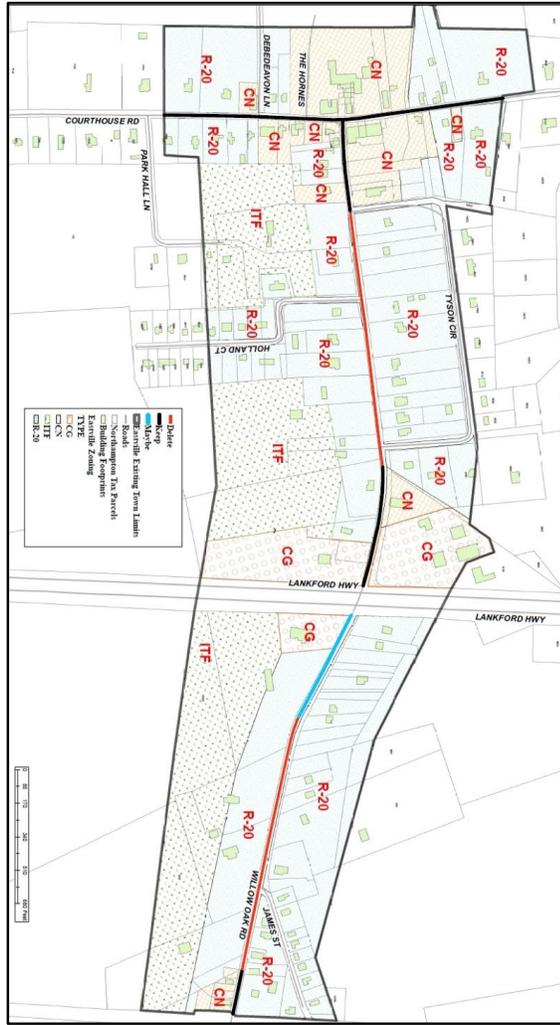
suggestion would be to add text to state this setback only applies to commercially zoned property as shown on the Eastville Zoning Map. This text also occurs in the CN – Commercial Neighborhood section 11-4(b) of the ordinance. The text is similar and it is attached below for your reference.

Section 12-6 Street Oriented Commercial Frontage: Non-residential development in the Courthouse Rd and Willow Oak Rd. corridor shall conform to the following provisions:

(a) Building facades should front on the sidewalk in substantial conformance with the existing historic downtown building envelope with a **maximum setback of twenty feet from the property line or right of way adjacent to the areas of Courthouse Road or Willow Oak road designated for Street Oriented Commercial Frontage on the Street Oriented Commercial Frontage map attached to this ordinance.** All on-site parking, above ground utility infrastructure, or other impediment to the continuity of the pedestrian environment shall be located behind the building.

Section 11-4 (b) Street Oriented Commercial Frontage: Commercial development in the Courthouse Rd and Willow Oak Rd. corridor highlighted in the Street Oriented Commercial Frontage map attached to this ordinance shall conform to the following provisions:

(1) Building facades should front on the sidewalk in substantial conformance with the existing historic downtown building envelope with a **maximum setback of twenty feet from the property line or right of way adjacent to the areas of Courthouse Road or Willow Oak road designated for Street Oriented Commercial Frontage on the Street Oriented Commercial Frontage map attached to this ordinance.** All on-site parking, above ground utility infrastructure, or other impediment to the continuity of the pedestrian environment shall be located behind the building.



It was the consensus of the Commission to change the rear setback for a primary structure from 35 feet to 50 feet and to change the rear setback for an accessory structure from 50 feet to 35 feet. The Commission agreed to delete the exception that would allow a reduced setback if a permitted use abuts a residential district.

The Commission added when a commercial use abuts a residential district, an opaque vegetative screening be installed.

The Planning Commission proposed changes to the Street Oriented Commercial Frontage map so it only applies to areas along Courthouse Road from the southernmost CN property and east on Willow Oak Road to Tyson Circle. In addition, the area on the eastern edge of town in front of the CN parcels will remain on the Street Oriented Commercial Frontage map with all other areas proposed to be removed.

The Commission discussed the draft Comprehensive Plan and made the edits as follows:

Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee Telephone Survey

As a part of its study, the CPAC commissioned American Strategies Incorporated to conduct a landline and cellular telephone survey of Northampton County residents. The study was conducted between July 9 and July 15, 2012, during which time 350 County residents over the age of 18 were contacted, representing a demographic breakdown that reflects the general gender and racial composition of the County. Three hundred and fifty residents responded to the CPAC survey compared to 298 residents in the Community Survey in 2005. The main results of this survey are as follows.

- 56% of the respondents say Northampton County is on the wrong track. Just 24 percent say things are going in the right direction.
- 58% say the County taxes and fees are too high.
- 76% say pace of business and commercial growth is too slow.
- 31% say the County's efforts to encourage business development are not very effective and 27% say it's not effective at all.
- 61% say the County needs to develop businesses beyond tourism to improve the local economy, and only 20% agree that the environment and natural resources are the County's most important job creator.
- 75% say there are too many regulations and restrictions stopping the development of new business opportunities along Route 13.
- 55% say the County needs to loosen regulations rather than maintain controls on growth and development.
- 45% agree that new business construction should be encouraged only in already developed areas while 49% disagree.
- 64% agree that the County needs to protect additional land and coastal areas from development in order to attract more tourists and help industries that depend on natural resources.
- 61% favor improving public schools.
- 55% believe creating a business friendly environment will attract new companies and jobs.

- 45% support an emergency medical facility in the southern part of the County.
- 45% support holding the line on County taxes and fees.

ANALYSIS

As previously noted, the visioning sessions were conducted before the 2010 census results and the draft Part 2 Data Section of the Comprehensive Plan were released. The following observations combine the vision with the most recently available data.

Population Growth

The 2009 Comprehensive Plan was based on the assumption that the County's population would increase slightly. However, the population has significantly declined, falling by 5.4% between 2000 and 2010, and continuing to decline through 2014, with a total loss of 7.39% between 2000 and 2014, illustrating that the decline continues. A majority of the visioning sessions' participants supported an annual population increase of 3% over the next 20 years, which would double the County's current population. An annual population increase of 3% over the next 20 years with a household size of 2.3, would require an additional 4,600 housing units.

Population affects the County in numerous ways. Retail establishments need customers, especially if they operate year round, and a decline in retail sales decreases County revenues. If the population loss is occurring in people between the ages of 25 and 50, it decreases the key workforce demographic, making the County less attractive to potential industrial employers. And an aging population has implications for the types and costs of services the County needs to provide. These are some of the factors that played an important role in the hospital's decision to move out of Northampton County.

Population also affects decisions regarding infrastructure, which must be capable of handling not just the resident population, but the maximum potential population, requiring that there be substantial overcapacity at increased cost. This would affect not only the size and cost of water and sewer systems, but roads, police, fire and emergency response services and health care facilities.

The Planning Commission believes the resident population will continue to decline over the short term and the cost of providing needed services to the aging and infrastructure will require increased revenues. Despite the decline in population, second home buyers and tourist will place increased stress on the County's existing infrastructure.

Jobs and Economic Development

Between 2000 and 2011, the number of jobs in Northampton County fell by 10.6%, and between 1999 and 2014, the loss was even greater, totaling 20.7%. The number of jobs fell from 6,042 in 1999 to 4,786 in April of 2014. The relocation of the hospital is expected to result in a loss of over 600 more jobs, making the decline over 30%. Given these figures, it is not surprising that employment and wages were issues raised by every group during the public input sessions.

Increasingly, Northampton County residents are dependent on finding work outside the County. According to the 2001 Comprehensive Plan, citing data from the Virginia Employment Commission, in 1999 only 917 residents lived in the County and worked elsewhere. The June, 2015 Virginia Employment Commission report on Northampton, a chart indicates that 4,202 residents now work outside the County, and that 2,047 non-residents work inside the County. But there is a notation that the Decennial Census no longer produces commuting patterns beyond 2011 and the Employment Commission now relies on an alternative source of Census

Comment [PS1]: Add chart name or reference

data which is produced from an entirely different data set, warning that it is not advisable to compare the new data with previously released commuting patterns. A separate chart in the June, 2015 VEC report lists the TOP 10 PLACES RESIDENTS ARE COMMUTING TO, and the total for those Top 10 places is 2,628, with the top 10 places workers are commuting from being 1,371, but it is not clear what year those figures represent. Also, since these are only the top 10 places, that implies there are more than 10 places people commute to and from, and so the figure would be greater, but how much greater is unknown. This is further complicated by data from other sections of the Census, which place the workforce at a little over 6,000, with the number of jobs in the county at around 4,790, but making no distinction between how many of those jobs are filled by Northampton residents. Depending on which data set is used and which years it covers, the portion of the resident population working outside the County is somewhere between 35% and over 50%, and when the hospital relocates, these percentages are expected to rise.

Using data from different sources and for different years makes comparisons difficult. The figures from 2011 are at least from the same source and the same year, and so are the most statistically consistent, with the data for subsequent years from different sources less so. Despite these differences, there is a trend that the number of jobs in the County is declining and residents are increasingly dependent on finding work outside the County, and with the hospital's relocation, will only increase.

The loss of jobs is an indication of an overall decline in the County's economy. While Bay Shore Concrete and New Ravenna have grown, and Ace Hardware opened, their growth has not offset the losses resulting from the closings of many national and regional stores, such as K-Mart, Fresh Pride, Roses, Cato, A&N Clothing, Burger King, Taco Bell/KFC, Wendy's and 2 branch banks. The decline in local businesses cause people to patronize stores in other localities, and by one method of calculation, Northampton County residents spend 23 cents of every dollar of disposable income outside the County. Nor has the growth of aquaculture compensated for the job loss in agriculture resulting from mechanization and technology.

Public input strongly favors more economic development, with 76% of the phone survey respondents saying that economic development is too slow, and 75% saying there are too many restrictions on development along Route 13, and 55% saying that the County needs to loosen regulations and restrictions on growth and development generally. The CPAC phone survey findings are generally consistent with the results of the CPAC, the Stakeholders Group and the public visioning sessions.

A majority of the respondents (61%) in the phone survey agree that tourism and agriculture do not provide enough jobs to support Northampton families, and that that County needs to develop other businesses and industry to improve the local economy.

The quality of the County's educational system and the need for increased workforce training were also major issues identified by the public and the Stakeholders. As expressed by the CPAC "Much of the County's population, especially those in the younger demographic, are not receiving an education that prepares them for current-day employment opportunities, nor do they possess the life skills that are necessary for success in the workforce." A 2014 Competitive Assessment commissioned by the County noted "The public school system was reported to be in good shape until recently. The tipping point has been identified as the time when schools were not just teaching students, but required to teach to the standardized test." The report also stated that one of the downsides of living in Northampton County is that many professional skills are

Comment [PS2]: Update data and chart

not currently located within the County, and the residents often have to find tradesmen from other areas. While recognizing that the school population is too small to support a technical high school, the Competitive study recommended a Career-Technical Training program be established within the existing system to address the lack of available trained workers.

There is a significant investment lost when workers, especially young workers, must find jobs in other counties. Currently, the per-pupil expenditure is over \$12,000 a year, which, as noted in the 2014 Competitive Study, is not significantly higher than the Virginia average of \$11,683. Over a 12 year period, this would amount to a total investment of \$144,000 in each student. For each student that leaves the area to find employment, this investment is a loss of taxpayer money, which can only be recovered by increasing the job opportunities within the County.

Another consideration is that few families can survive on a single income, especially given the low median wage. According to the MIT living wage calculator, almost half the industries in Northampton County pay less than a living wage. Examining the number of jobs simply on an industry basis does not account for dependency of residents on multi-wage earners within the family structure. For example, 42% of all farm operators listed their primary occupation as "other", and 92 of the 147 farm operators in the County worked off the farm and 56 (38%) worked more than 200 days a year off the farm. Of the 968 hired farm workers in 2012, 493 worked less than 150 days. So even in the County's largest industry, the need for work in other industries is essential. Nationally, 75% of farm household income is derived from non-farming earning, often from the spouse. This illustrates the need not just for more jobs, but for a broader and more diverse economic base to support those seasonal base industries that are a major portion of the County's economy.

The Planning Commission projects that the number of jobs in Northampton County will continue to decline, and with the relocation of the hospital, decline significantly. The Commission does not anticipate any near term reversal in the economic condition of the County, and that a reversal of this trend is dependent upon the adoption of significant and substantial changes in the rules and regulations that govern development especially along Route 13, the upgrading of the educational system and the expansion of infrastructure.

With no further business the Chairman asked for a motion to adjourn. A motion to adjourn until June 7, 2016 was made by Commissioner Ward and seconded by Commissioner Leatherbury. The motion carried with all in favor (5-0).

Chairman

Secretary