

Minutes
Northampton County Planning Commission
Work Session
November 28, 2012

This was a recessed meeting of the Northampton County Planning Commission held on Wednesday, November 28, 2012 in the main conference room in the County Administration Building located at 16404 Courthouse Road in Eastville, Virginia. The purpose of the meeting was to continue review of the comprehensive plan.

Those present were Chair Martina Coker, Vice-Chair Michael Ward, Mary Miller, Dixon Leatherbury and Roberta Kellam. Absent from the meeting were Severn Carpenter and Sylvia Stanley.

Also attending were Peter Stith, Long Range Planner; and Kay Downing, Administrative Assistant.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. and a quorum established.

The agenda was unanimously accepted as presented upon proper motion by Commissioner Kellam and second by Commissioner Leatherbury.

The Commission then reviewed a new work plan designating subcommittees and comp plan section assignments. Mr. Stith noted that this subcommittee strategy should help move the process along. He reminded everyone that this is a review of the plan and that some sections may not need to be extensively re-written. Each subcommittee will draft updates to each assigned section which will then be reviewed by the entire Commission. Also, subcommittees are to communicate with staff and when meetings are held so public information can be posted if necessary. Subcommittees can work by email and emailed materials can still be transmitted through staff as well. Tentative dates for section draft reviews were set as follows: January for Natural Resources; Community Facilities by mid-January; Transportation Section in February; History and Geography in January; Housing and the Transportation to be determined; and the Economic section in March.

Discussion on the Housing Plan was held. Commissioner Ward expressed his concern that better data should be used than what appears in the Census. It was suggested that Weldon Cooper be contacted as well. It was decided that the monthly data compiled by Mason-Davis Realty on housing starts, housing restarts and housing sales may be useful as a good resource.

Mr. Stith submitted an updated Economic Analysis section dated Nov. 28, 2012 to the Commission to be discussed in the future.

Commissioner Miller submitted Code language for review related to affordable housing, specifically Section 15.2-2223 and 15.2-2284. It was her opinion that since age-restricted housing is now advertising then the county has adequately addressed the need for this type of housing. However, Commissioner Kellam stressed that advertising is for the wait-list and there are no or very few vacancies. She also noted that designated areas for this type of housing should be accomplished. Commissioner Miller noted that developers do not want to construct low-income housing due to lack of profit. However, Commissioner Kellam stated that church organizations are interested and still build such housing. Commissioner Miller noted that a central sewage system is needed to accommodate such housing options. She also noted that the best the county can do is to ensure that small lots are provided to accommodate small house options such as exists in the Treherneville area. Commissioner Ward expressed his opinion that aging assisted-living options should be provided in the southern portion of the county. It was his opinion that existing county regulations focus mainly on low-income housing and does not address other types of housing for retirees and age-assisted options. Commissioner Miller suggested that a floating zone be developed allowing assisted living housing options offering different levels of care because then proffers would be available to the county and there would be more control over such projects. Commissioner Kellam suggested adding the Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission information on weatherization and other programs in the analysis section. The Chair suggested that the statement promoting homeownership be deleted. She also suggested that analysis of the renters' pool be included. It was also noted that high-value real estate should be protected as a vital county tax asset. Commissioner Miller noted that fish processing allowed by right in Accomack's agriculture district may impact real estate values there. In Section 4.3.1 that addressed the need for partnerships Commissioner Miller noted that the New Roads Community was such a partnership which has a limited number of duplexes. However, like the Bayview development, New Roads now has some properties in foreclosure. Commissioner Miller also noted that another option worth investigating to achieve low to moderate income housing is new market credit program that has been a success in Norfolk. It would involve locating commercial space on the first floor and housing on the second. She also noted that there has been no interest shown in land bank programs. It was noted that the extremely low-income renters are the same cohort as in the poverty statistics related to single head of household females with dependent children. Also, the county should encourage subsidized housing programs and preservation and improvement of existing low income housing. However, county partnerships with the towns have not proved successful where central water and sewer is lacking. Also, new mixed income inclusionary housing developments are not being developed. However, that type of community does exist in the incorporated towns. There is a need to identify housing issues and data will dictate needed strategies. Also, density is an issue that needs to be considered. It was decided that updated housing data will be forwarded to the subcommittee by Mr. Stith. It was also noted that regulations adopted to promote work-force housing was not accepted by the Zoning Administrator because of density requirements in the Ag District that requires 40 acres to subdivide one new lot or to allow a new single-family dwelling on one acre, the minimum lot size in the Ag District. It was agreed that there is not an adequate number of suitable and affordable rental housing such as guest cottages. Commissioner Miller noted that the Town of Eastville has just adopted regulations that would

allow more of this housing. Based on a side-walk survey, Commissioner Miller noted that most apartments rent for approximately \$700.

Commissioner Miller noted that a proffer policy had been written by the Housing Committee but not adopted by the Board.

An adequate level of services needs to be adopted by the County to plan for new development thresholds according to the Code of Virginia.

Commissioner Ward expressed his opinion that part-time residents who own property would like to have the option of a caretaker's cottage on their property.

Population and Economic Analysis, Parts I and II, will be reviewed at a future meeting. Mr. Stith will distribute another updated draft and will send each subcommittee their respective comp plan sections.

It was noted again that e-mails will need to be kept and also copied to staff if subcommittees wish to work utilizing email.

In Section 5, Environment & Natural Resources Plan, it was determined that the format should be made more consistent with other sections and issues listed as appropriate. Commissioners Coker and Kellam will work on this section.

Commissioner Miller noted that the Board is reviewing county regulations versus minimum Code requirements. She asked that the commission be provided that information if related to land use. However, Commissioner Kellam stated that based on public input and data the commission should continue its review regardless of what the Board is considering in order to take a more apolitical approach.

The commission also decided that LiDar map information be utilized and inundation maps included along with endangered species lists. Commissioner Kellam stated that this information will be useful in defending strategies once the data is reviewed.

Due to holiday conflicts, the next regular meeting of the commission was established as Wednesday, January 2, 2013 and January 16 was established as the next work session date.

Adjourn:

At 9:05 p.m., motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Kellam and seconded by Commissioner Ward. The motion carried unanimously 5 to 0.

Chair

Secretary