

Minutes

Northampton County Planning Commission

Work Session

April 17, 2012

This was a recessed meeting of the Northampton County Planning Commission held on Tuesday, April 17, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. in the Administrative Office downstairs conference room located at 16404 Courthouse Road in Eastville, Virginia. The purpose of the meeting was to continue review of the comprehensive plan draft revised vision statement.

Those present were Chair Martina Coker, Vice-Chair Michael Ward, Dixon Leatherbury, Roberta Kellam, Severn Carpenter and Mary Miller. Those absent were David Fauber and John Wescoat, Jr.

Also attending were Sandra G. Benson, Director of Planning & Zoning; and Kay Downing, Administrative Assistant.

The Chair called the commission meeting to order at 7:05 p. m., and established a quorum.

The agenda was reviewed and unanimously accepted 6 to 0 upon motion by Commissioner Miller and second by Commissioner Carpenter.

Commissioner Leatherbury had disseminated revisions to the draft vision which was reviewed along with that submitted by Ms. Benson.

Discussion was continued on the type of format that should be used and how detailed the vision should be.

During the meeting Commissioner Miller noted that there are 119 population centers based on her analysis and questioned if the county with a population of 12,000 would require more centers. She asked if the plan should state that development should primarily be in those existing 119 population centers. However, Ms. Benson questioned if existing subdivisions would actually become development centers that would include commercial activity. To state that all development has to be within one of those centers would perhaps limit all development options.

Commissioner Kellam stated that she was not anticipating a goal summary but a vision statement and goals would then be listed separately. What is proposed sounds redundant in her opinion. Perhaps a vision could basically state that it is based on the summary of public input since no data has been evaluated yet. It was her opinion that the vision should be drafted first, then a summary of public input, followed by the data analysis in order to finalize goals.

Commissioner Miller suggested removing the goals summary part of the vision.

Ms. Benson was questioned about the process that the Plan Review Stakeholders Group (PRSG) would use when analyzing the public workshop data. It is her intent to provide a written, detailed memo outlining the process for the PRSG to use in their assessment efforts.

It was decided that the vision would be redesigned as a theme summary and that Sections 1.3, 1.3.1 and that 1.3.2 be edited and re-distributed to those bullet points they refer to before being submitted to the PRSG.

Ms. Benson stated that she saw no problem articulating goals since the commission is suppose to look at long term goals.

Commissioner Kellam expressed her concern about another whole comp plan section being worked on by the Plan Advisory Committee (PAC) and there is no real concept of how that information will be integrated into the plan. She suggested there be some sort of “bridging step” with all groups referring to the PAC, the planning commission and the PRSG. Ms. Benson agreed, but was unsure what that step would be and noted that the planning commission and the Board will get the PAC report and the commission will have to decide how to best utilize that information.

Ms. Benson suggested that the PRSG be provided a summary of the public input data from the workshops and the commission’s draft vision statement in order to not confuse issues and goals yet. The PRSG will vet the data/themes against the draft vision to ensure that the vision actually previews public input gleaned from the workshops.

Commissioner Kellam asked that a hard copy of Peter Stith’s public workshop power point presentation be provided to the PRSG and commission.

Referring back to a meeting with Mary Rae Carter, Commissioner Miller stated that it was her impression that the county should focus on what resources are readily available. In other words, if we have potatoes, then just don’t ship potatoes, but do something here with them as well since the most successful rural counties are those that use what they have. Also, Commissioner Miller noted that the State Director of the Chamber of Commerce has stated that high end tourism would be best for the county to produce revenue and tax dollars.

By consensus, it was agreed that staff would forward the redesigned vision to the commission prior to its distribution to the PRSG.

Discussion continued on various edits needed to the draft vision including, but not limited to, architectural standards alluded to in the fifth bullet point in Section 1.3.2 on page 2. Also bullet point 2 under Community Development, Growth and Change could be construed to limit any new residential development. However, Ms. Benson stated that this statement does not allude to residential development exclusively.

Comments were made concerning the wording related to infrastructure location. Ms. Benson warned that the comp plan should not be used to limit or restrict infrastructure locations in order to tie the hands of the Public Service Authority.

Commissioner Miller encouraged commissioners to attend the PRSG meetings but clarified that the commission would not be in session.

Adjourn:

At 9:10 p.m., a motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Kellam and seconded by Commissioner Carpenter. The motion carried unanimously 6 to 0.

Chair

Secretary