

VIRGINIA:

At a recessed meeting of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Northampton, Virginia, held in the Social Services Training Room, 5265 The Hornes, Eastville, Virginia, on the 11th day of April, 2012, at 7:00 p.m.

Present:

Oliver H. Bennett, Chairman

Willie C. Randall, Vice Chairman

Richard L. Hubbard

Larry LeMond

Absent:

Laurence J. Trala

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman.

The Northampton County Planning Commission was also present and in session.

The Board reviewed the Planning Commission's Work Plan for 2011 and the summary information as to which tasks have been completed and which tasks remain. It was the consensus of the Board that the on-going Comprehensive Plan review and update was the top priority for the Commission.

When asked by the Planning Commission what the Board's top priority was, Mr. LeMond replied that the Board "was all about business and jobs". He said that it seems that the existing Comprehensive Plan "locks things down too much." He said that he was interested in seeing a Comprehensive Plan that was business-friendly and is very interested in seeing the recommendations that will come from the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee.

Mr. Hubbard stated that it was imperative to have land already commercially zoned which contain a reasonable number of commercial uses allowed by right. Water and sewer

capability is also important.

Mr. Randall advised that the Planning Commission needs to start with the Board's basic goals and objectives that were developed during its Strategic Planning Retreat last month; these will "set the tone" for the Comprehensive Plan. He said that Northampton County has the reputation for being "a tough community to do business in", and that we need to change this perception. The feared population explosion has not occurred.

Mr. Bennett stated that he hears a lot of comments on the need for applications to be more user-friendly – the large amount of "red tape" involving a long and expensive process. He stated that Northampton County is business-friendly and that businesses are welcome in the County. Mrs. Kellam responded that reputable firms are accustomed to dealing with applications and the public process involved.

Ms. Benson noted that currently staff is analyzing the input received through the public information sessions and in response to Mr. Bennett's question, replied that staff is making every effort to guide customers through the application process.

Mr. Hubbard added that he also hears from visitors to the office that there is an "attitude" among staff that "it can't be done" in Northampton County. Ms. Benson suggested that perhaps this meeting is not the proper format for discussion of staff actions.

Mr. Randall questioned the planning staff as to whether any thought had been given to the creation of a commercial zone with many uses being allowed by right. Ms. Benson responded that the process is not evolved to that point at this time and that staff continues to analyze and develop data for the Planning Commission's review based on comments received at the public information sessions.

There was a brief discussion relative to the creation of a "shovel-ready" industrial park,

which had been mentioned during the Board's Strategic Planning Retreat. Ms. Roberta Kellam of the Planning Commission stated that such rezoning would eliminate the Board's ability to generate proffers for any proposed project.

Mr. LeMond noted that it "goes back to perception". In his 16 years here in the County, multiple companies have approached him (and the railroad) about locating in the County and nothing has materialized. He said that you have to "knock down those roadblocks" and get a successful project to locate here; i.e., you "need to grease the skids" and do "whatever it takes."

Planning Commissioner Mike Ward stated that the Board is putting the Planning Commission in a position of having to make choices for areas of growth when there is no indication from the land owners that they are agreeable to same. As it relates to water and wastewater, it was noted that the Eastern Shore Public Service Authority is mandated to follow the Comprehensive Plan as it relates to areas of future growth. When Mrs. Kellam stated that a presentation from the PSA would be helpful to the Commission, the Board directed the County Administrator to request same from the PSA.

When discussing relevant criteria for future economic growth, it was noted that railroad and highway access, as well as proximity to water and sewer capability, were crucial elements. Of course, the Future Land Use Map does indicate areas planned for commercial and industrial activity. Once those areas are plotted, the zoning and other ordinances can be aligned to it, as well as providing lists of allowed uses.

Mrs. Mary Miller of the Planning Commission noted that there is an existing floating overlay district that may be helpful to the Board, calling it a "good marketing tool".

One of the continuing work tasks noted was the completion of Town Edge Plans. It was noted that the Planning Commission has not been very successful in its attempts to work with the

some of the towns, despite several overtures. Mrs. Kellam said that these relationships need to be improved. If the “town edge” concept survives the on-going Comprehensive Plan Review process, the County Administrator suggested that it be renamed “County Edge” as these areas are targeted to be the County’s growth areas adjacent to the towns – not areas of expansion for the towns. She also stated that she feels that the County “has been held hostage by the towns’ inability to come to the table” on the issue of the Town Edge Plans.

Mr. Hubbard continued his earlier comments by stating that he felt that three separate areas need to be planned: industrial, traditional commercial, and retail.

The Board reviewed the other work tasks remaining for 2011 as well as those planned for 2012. When questioned by Chairman Bennett, the County Administrator indicated that the Commission’s proposed work tasks for 2012 appear to be appropriate, although she noted that the Chesapeake Bay TMDL issue may need to be added, either under the Comprehensive Plan Review process or as a separate issue.

Mr. Hubbard left the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

The Board and Commission conducted a general discussion of a capital improvement plan and its role as an implementation tool of the Comprehensive Plan.

With the absences of Mr. Hubbard and Mr. Trala, the Board agreed to a continued review of the Planning Commission’s Work Plan and will bring this item back for action at its April 23rd work session.

Recess:

Motion was made by Mr. Randall, seconded by Mr. LeMond, that the meeting be recessed until 5:00 p.m., Monday, April 23, 2012 in the Board Room of the County Administration Building, 16404 Courthouse Road, Eastville, Virginia, to conduct the regular

work session. All members were present with the exception of Mr. Trala and Mr. Hubbard and voted “yes.” The motion was unanimously passed.

The meeting was recessed.

_____ CHAIRMAN

_____ COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR