

MEETING NOTES

York 2040 Committee

Wednesday, February 6, 2019
Public Works Multi-Purpose Room
105 Service Drive, Yorktown, Virginia

Members Present: Gregory “Skip” Brooks, W. Chad Green, Leigh Houghland, Montgoussaint “Montee” E. Jons, Michael S. King, Vivian McGettigan, Richard Myer, Sheila Myers, Jacob Rizzio, Eugene Seiter, and Cowles “Buddy” Spencer

Staff Present: Susan Kassel, Director of Planning and Development Services; Timothy Cross, Deputy Director of Planning and Development Services; Amy Parker, Senior Planner; Earl Anderson, Senior Planner; Gail Whittaker, Public Information Officer; Justin Atkins, Assistant County Attorney; and Victoria “Vicki” Diggs, Clerk

Members Absent: Mark Bellamy, Eric Henegar, and R. Anderson Moberg

Call to Order – Chairman Michael King

Chairman King called the meeting to order at approximately 7:00 p.m. and explained that the County’s Economic Development Authority is having a function tonight that Mr. Moberg is attending as a member of the EDA.

In response to Chairman King’s request, one visitor in attendance, Robert “Buck” Rodgers, introduced himself to the Committee.

Approval of December 5, 2018 Meeting Notes

The December 5, 2018 meeting notes were approved unanimously.

Potential Public Outreach Opportunities – Gail Whittaker, Public Information Officer

Ms. Whittaker stated that the main objectives of publicizing the Comprehensive Plan update are to inform the public about the Comprehensive Plan York 2040 Committee and the update process; to invite the public to offer comments and suggestions throughout the process via a variety of methods; to provide Committee members with the tools to reach out to the public; and to ensure that every effort has been made to gather citizen input for optimum “buy-in.” During her presentation she highlighted the following public outreach efforts, some of which are underway while others are suggestions presented for the Committee’s consideration, for engaging and involving the public in the Comprehensive Plan review and update process:

- Issuance of press releases regarding the Comprehensive Plan process and how citizens can become involved;
- Continual media updates providing specifics on meeting dates and locations, etc.;
- Utilizing the project website to offer the latest news and updates on meetings and the update process;

- Online surveys and Facebook polls;
- Commercials featuring Committee members to be posted on the County website and Facebook;
- A blog with information provided by Committee members;
- A phone comment line where citizens can leave recorded messages;
- Speaking engagements with homeowners associations, civic organizations, etc.;
- Table top displays at County events and other community locations such as the YMCA;
- 11" x 17" posters displayed at County facilities and local businesses;
- Meeting announcements on the County's cable channels 46 and 48 and on social media;
- Advertisements and articles in the Citizen News;
- A special program that can be aired in the fall on County TV, website, and YouTube, in which Committee members are interviewed about the Plan review process; and
- A presentation at an upcoming Board of Supervisors' meeting.

Following her presentation, Ms. Whittaker explained that only comments accompanied by the individual's name and address would be considered valid in any and all of the above scenarios. She also stated that the overall goal of the aforementioned media options is to obtain input from citizens and to entice them to attend meetings. In conclusion, she stated that all comments will be provided to the Committee.

In response to Mr. Rodgers' suggestion to use SurveyMonkey to obtain citizen input, Ms. Whittaker explained that this is the standard tool used by the County for online surveys.

Chairman King stated that SurveyMonkey is an excellent tool for gathering public input; however, a variety of options will also be utilized in order to reach all age groups so that the Plan truly reflects the desires of the citizens.

During the discussion on public outreach options, the following suggestions were offered:

- Ms. Myers suggested using the Yorktown Market Days as a venue to distribute information to citizens about the process and how they can participate via a table top display. Ms. Whittaker agreed and added that having items to give away would entice people to visit the table.
- Following Chairman King's remarks regarding acknowledging the importance of citizen comments, Ms. Whittaker stated that on the York 2040 website, comments can be attributed to citizens by identifying them by their first name and last initial.

- In response to Mr. Seiter's suggestion, Ms. Whittaker stated that information on the Plan update process could be disseminated to the local churches as well.
- Following Mr. Rizzio's suggestion to reach younger citizens by using Twitter and Instagram, Ms. Whittaker stated that the County has a Twitter account that will be used to disseminate information but that the County does not have an Instagram account.
- Ms. McGettigan suggested that Mr. Rizzio, as the Youth Commission's representative, could address this group on a regular basis updating them on the process and encouraging them to become involved and maybe included questions related to the Comprehensive Plan in their student surveys.
- In response to Mr. Myer's expressed concern that individuals could possibly skew the results by repeatedly submitting the same comments, Ms. Whittaker stated that with staff's assistance they will be able to identify and properly handle this situation. Earl Anderson, Senior Planner, added that redundancy can easily be detected when the responder comments on Facebook. Likewise, Ms. Whittaker stated that surveys on SurveyMonkey can be set up to prevent individuals from responding to an online survey more than once.
- Mr. Jons suggested making a special effort to reach the Hispanic population.
- Mr. Myer suggested that "*Weigh Anchor*" should replace the current "*Raise the Anchor*" on the Comprehensive Plan blog site.

Mr. Brooks and Chairman King commended Ms. Whittaker on the presentation and for presenting so many options for the Committee's consideration to actively engage the public in the update process. Ms. Whittaker added that the County's Facebook page can be used to provide meeting dates and times and encourage meeting attendance; however, the survey will ask more specific, pertinent questions.

In response to Chairman King's query, Ms. Whittaker stated that she needs specific feedback from the Committee as to how they want her to publicize the update process. However, she also explained that she cannot move forward with the aforementioned media options until meeting dates and the survey have been finalized. Lastly, she pointed out that the absence of a Daily Press reporter specifically assigned to cover the County hampers her ability to fully inform the public about the update process.

In response to Mr. Rodgers' comment, Ms. Whittaker stated that she would be happy to provide him with a copy of her presentation.

In conclusion, Chairman King applauded Ms. Whittaker for her presentation and, with the Committee's concurrence, asked her to move forward with all of her suggested publicity options.

Discussion of Potential Survey Questions – Earl Anderson, AICP, Senior Planner

Copies of the draft Comprehensive Plan survey questions were distributed to all attendees. Prior to his presentation, Mr. Anderson explained that the draft telephone survey was composed of some questions used in prior surveys as well as some new ones. As he briefly reviewed the draft survey questions, the following recommendations were offered:

- Leigh Houghland expressed concern about the length of time it would take to answer the questions and he recommended telling the respondents in advance approximately how long it would take to complete. Mr. Brooks and Ms. Myers concurred and stated that otherwise most citizens will hang up before the survey is completed. Ms. McGettigan added that these lengthy questions would be better posed at the public forums. Several Committee members agreed that the lengthy questions should be omitted from the phone survey and posed in another, more appropriate venue.
- Mr. Seiter remarked that some of the questions offer too many options and that perhaps only the three most important questions should be included in the telephone survey. He also stated that should all of the current questions remain in the survey, it would be helpful to separate the questions into specific categories.
- Chairman King stated that it would be beneficial to place the easy questions at the end of the survey when the respondent is tired. He also pointed out that the survey does not have to include all of the draft questions as Ms. Whittaker will use a variety of tools to obtain input from citizens.
- Mr. Myer expressed concern about redundant density questions to which Ms. Susan Kassel, Director of Planning and Development Services, explained that the density questions are quite different in that each would encourage a different outcome. Also Mr. Myer suggested adding a question as to whether the respondent has school-age children.
- Ms. Myers explained that the question regarding whether or not the respondent would oppose policies that would encourage housing for service and retail workers and entry-level teachers, firefighters, etc. is unnecessary because no one would oppose such policies.
- Mr. Rodgers asked that the Senior Center be included in the question regarding County facilities.
- Mr. Jons suggested placing the demographic questions at the beginning of the survey as a precursor to the more important questions.

In response to a query, Mr. Cross stated that past surveys have always been able to obtain a sufficient number of completed responses in order to qualify as statistically valid within a 5% margin of error. Chairman King added that approximately 400 completed surveys are required and that the paid consultant will continue calling citizens until the required number of calls have been completed.

Mr. Cross stressed that this is the first draft of the telephone survey and that the consultants will offer their expertise in fine-tuning the questions.

Mr. Anderson explained that “green space” questions had been excluded from the survey as this concept typically receives unanimous affirmative responses and that comments on this item will be generated by other associated questions. In response to Mr. Brooks’ query about the inclusion of mass transportation in the Plan since it will extend to 2040, Mr. Cross stated that a mass transportation question can be added to the survey if the Committee so chooses. Mr. Jons explained that some localities have started using smaller buses providing more direct routes to specific high demand locations and that many positive changes in mass transportation are rapidly forthcoming. Board Supervisor, Chad Green added that he had learned at a recent transportation meeting in Richmond that automated buses are the future for mass transit. Following this brief conversation, Chairman King asked that a transportation question be added to the survey.

In conclusion, Mr. Anderson stated that the income question will be modified by collapsing the income categories. Mr. Cross added that staff will take into consideration the Committee’s suggestions when they meet with the survey consultant in the near future and that the resultant survey from this collaboration will be provided to the Committee for their review.

Preliminary Recommended Capital Improvements Program – Vivian McGettigan, Deputy County Administrator

Ms. McGettigan presented an overview of the County’s Capital Improvements Program (CIP) which included the following information:

- The proposed CIP, which was recently presented to the Board of Supervisors, is a multi-year funding “plan” for repair/replacement of existing local government infrastructure, construction and/or acquisition of new facilities or equipment.
- Typically, only projects which cost in excess of \$50,000 are included in the CIP.
- The County’s current plan covers six years with year one representing those projects included in the adopted budget and years two through six representing the plan that identifies future needs and initiatives.
- Projects that are currently underway include a new Fire Station 1 now under construction on North Constitution Drive and the expansion of the existing Yorktown Library to enhance youth programs and technology.
- The County Administrator and the CIP Review Committee, representing all County departments and the Schools, meet and collaborate to determine which projects are the most important for inclusion in the plan which are subsequently presented to the Board of Supervisors for their consideration.
- Major projects included in the preliminary recommended CIP space needs include a new Law Enforcement Center; the renovation and expansion of the Public Safety Building, which houses the Departments of Fire and Life Safety and Social Services; co-locating the Planning, Development Services, Building Regulation, and Stormwater Divisions into one building by adding an addition to connect the current Parks & Recreation and Development Services Buildings; upgrading the Registrar’s space via a short or long-term

lease of commercial property; and an increase in office space in the Finance building to mitigate current congestion.

- Public safety is a priority for the County Administrator, but he balances that with quality of life projects/items such as Yorktown enhancements, parks and recreation, sidewalks, etc.
- The CIP impacts the General Fund (Debt Service & Transfers) and is either paid by debt or pay-as-you-go. The County's debt policy was briefly explained and information on how the FY 2020 to FY 2025 CIP will be funded was provided.
- The Planning Commission will shortly receive a briefing on the draft CIP and will be asked to certify that it is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. As the operating budget is developed, the CIP will be further refined and presented by the County Administrator in conjunction with the FY 2020 budget proposal on May 7th.

In response to Mr. Rodgers' query, Ms. McGettigan stated that the County does not prepare a ten-year CIP as it is extremely difficult to determine priorities that far in advance.

During and after Ms. McGettigan's presentation, the following comments were made by Committee members:

- Ms. Myer asked how locations for new sidewalks are determined, to which Mr. Cross explained that an internal staff team has recently been tasked with making these recommendations. He stated that during the last Comprehensive Plan update, this team solicited input from citizens, the Historical Triangle Bicycle Advisory Committee, and the County's Transportation Safety Commission, as well as comments received via SurveyMonkey, which included questions on sidewalks, bike paths, etc.
- Mr. Green suggested that the Committee members use every opportunity to talk to their friends and neighbors so that they will feel free to share their comments on the Plan with them.
- Mr. Spencer opined that more funds should be designated for economic development because good economic development provides substantial revenues for the County.

Discussion of April Meeting Date

Chairman King stated that the next meeting will be on March 6th and noted that the April 5 meeting date coincides with the School Division's spring break. Following a brief discussion, the Committee agreed to move its April meeting date from the 5th to the 8th. Mr. Cross added that the March meeting might be held at the Yorktown Library and that staff would notify the members of the definite location prior to the next meeting.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:06 p.m.