

MEETING NOTES

York 2040 Committee

Wednesday, August 7, 2019 – 7:00 p.m.
Public Works Multi-Purpose Room
105 Service Drive, Yorktown, Virginia

Members Present: Mark Bellamy, Gregory “Skip” Brooks, Chad Green, Leigh Houghland, Montgoussaint “Montee” E. Jons, Michael S. King, Vivian McGettigan, Richard Myer, R. Anderson Moberg, 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; Daria Linsinbigler, Planning Assistant; Gail Whittaker, Public Information Officer; Jason Atkins, Assistant County Attorney; and Victoria “Vicki” Diggs, Administrative Assistant

Member Absent: Sheila Myers

Call to Order – Chairman Michael S. King

Chairman King called the meeting to order at approximately 7:00 p.m. and welcomed the Committee members and visitors. Chairman King commended Vicki Diggs for a job well done in her service to the committee and announced that it would be her last meeting. He introduced Daria Linsinbigler, Planning Assistant in the Planning Division, as the committee’s new administrative support person.

Approval of May 1, 2019 Meeting Notes

The May 1, 2019 meeting notes were approved unanimously.

York County Comprehensive Plan Study

Ms. Rachel Burgess, Principal, SIR (Southeastern Institute of Research) gave a presentation on the recently completed scientific telephone survey on the Comprehensive Plan. She stated that the objective of the survey was to identify key priorities for the Comprehensive Plan, to identify the level of resident support for potential Comprehensive Plan initiatives, and to compare results according to various demographic factors. She noted the following:

- Ms. Burgess presented the results of the scientific survey conducted by telephone (45% cell phone/55% land line), adding that an unscientific online convenience survey was also conducted.
- The target audience consisted of residents aged 18 or older who reside in York County.
- 464 surveys were completed.

Chairman King asked Ms. Burgess to explain the difference between a scientific survey and an unscientific survey. Ms. Burgess replied that scientific surveys are conducted using random sampling techniques to ensure that the respondents accurately represent the population at large. She added that in some cases responses are to ensure that the demographics of the sample reflect the demographics of the County.

Richard Myer asked how the cell phone numbers were obtained. Ms. Burgess replied they that SIR partnered with a telephone call center that obtained the numbers through Verizon.

Ms. Burgess further explained the following demographics of the survey respondents and indicated that the data was weighted by age group and area of County to more closely reflect the Census data for York County. The categories of the respondents of the survey are as follows:

- About 9 in 10 live in Lower York County and the remainder live in upper York County.
- Genders surveyed:
 - 48% Male
 - 52% Female
- Generations surveyed:
 - 28% Gen Z/Millennials
 - 36% Generation X
 - 22% Boomers
- Average length of residence
 - 19 years
- Annual Household Income
 - \$91,000

Gregory “Skip” Brooks questioned the income figure, which he felt was on the high end. He expressed concern that the survey results might not represent all income levels. Ms. Burgess explained that it is an overall average of the incomes of all the survey respondents. Chad Green stated that the median income in the County is around \$88,000.

Ms. Burgess stated that the demographic makeup of the survey sample is as follows:

- Demographics surveyed:
 - Race
 - 78% White
 - 12% Black or African-American
 - 10% Other
 - Hispanic Ethnicity
 - 4% Hispanic or Latino
 - 96% Not Hispanic or Latino

Ms. Burgess commented that the survey results indicate that nearly 9 in 10 residents are satisfied living in York County. Three of the things they liked most about the County are schools, low taxes and the quiet location, while the items they liked least were traffic and roads.

Chairman King asked Ms. Burgess to clarify whether the dislike of roads referred to the condition of the roads or congestion on the roads. Ms. Burgess responded that she believed it referred to congestion. Mr. Myer asked about the difference between parks for active and passive recreation. Timothy Cross, Deputy Director of Planning and Development Services, responded that active recreation includes facilities such as athletic fields, and tennis and basketball courts as opposed to walking trails, playgrounds, and picnic shelters.

Ms. Burgess reported that the top three changes of the last twenty years that people have not liked have to do with growth, development, and traffic congestion. She stated that changes the respondents would like to see include the following:

- Transportation improvements
- Less development
- More local businesses with technical jobs/nice restaurants.
- Improvement of schools and teachers' salaries.
- Bike paths and sidewalks

Ms. Burgess noted that while 66% of the respondents said it was important to focus on developing moderately priced housing, only 33% supported the idea of allowing more homes per acre in some areas to achieve this. She added that 2 in 5 residents feel it is important to attract commercial establishments while a quarter support increasing allowable residential densities to attract commercial establishments.

Ms. Burgess commented that baby boomers prefer to age in place and want to live in a walkable community. Eugene Seiter agreed that this type of lifestyle seems to be more desirable. Montgoussaint "Montee" E. Jons asked what type of mixed-use development residents do not want. Ms. Brooks responded that the survey did not include that question.

Ms. Burgess reported that more than two-thirds of residents support the growth of home-based business in York County and that half of those respondents also support allowing clients coming to the homes. Susan Kassel, Director of Planning and Development Services explained home-based businesses traditionally consisted of service businesses such as hairdressing or grass cutting but that today, many home occupations are virtually invisible in terms of their impact on the surrounding neighborhood. Ms. Burgess commented that as mixed use becomes more prevalent, this is something for the County to consider in its future planning. Mr. Brooks opined that if the County wants to promise home occupations, it will need to work with homeowners' associations to allow people to work from their homes.

Residents are mostly satisfied with their internet services, particularly if they have fiber internet service.

Ms. Burgess concluded that the survey results indicate that, in general, York County residents are satisfied overall with where they live and the schools, although residents expressed a desire for slower growth in the next twenty years. Based on the results, she stated that primary focus should be placed on:

- Moderately priced housing
- Infrastructure expansion
- Schools
- Parks
- Roads
- Sidewalks
- Flooding infrastructure

Ms. Burgess spoke about national trends that will have an impact on the County's future planning, such as the increased desire for walkable communities, noting that more and more in which residents would prefer to have restaurants, stores, and services within fifteen minutes from home and live within fifteen minutes of work or school.

Ms. Burgess commented that rising housing and transportation costs are a concern and the percentage of children who earn more than their parents is on the decline. She stated that a nationwide study showed that 40% of Americans live paycheck to paycheck and that 40% cannot cover a \$400 emergency expense. Ms. Burgess stated that the "wealth gap" is growing at an alarming rate and 1 in 5 baby boomers have less than \$10,000 in savings.

Ms. Burgess also described the shift in the workplace, noting the trend toward more people working from home. The survey respondents also showed that they want a balance in both work and life. She stated 91% of young people stay in a job for less than three years, which means they could have fifteen to twenty jobs across their working life. In addition, she stated that a large percentage of young adults freelance and prefer that work is no longer tied to a place, and she noted that 61% of freelancers would consider moving to a new city for a tax break of less than \$5,000.

In conclusion, Rachel Burgess, stated that York County will benefit from its location in the "golden crescent" area that stretches from Northern Virginia, through central Virginia, to Hampton Roads. She said that growth is coming from older people rather than younger people as the aging population is living longer and birth rates are declining. She noted that home based businesses could be a great opportunity for York County; people support them and it is in line with the growing trend of freelancing, especially among the younger population. Lastly, she stated that schools are important for all residents and that maintaining and improving existing schools should be the focus before building additional schools.

Mr. Brooks applauded Ms. Burgess for being able to obtain this telephone survey and agreed that this would be a very beneficial resource to the citizens and boards of York County. Mr. Cross said the presentation would be available on the county website the following day. Cowles "Buddy" Spencer pointed out that the committee's goal is to chart the course for the future and the data is not intended just for today's use. Chairman King agreed these are long-range goals that the Committee will be working on.

Comprehensive Plan Youth Survey Results

Jacob Rizzio reported that he recently conducted an unscientific survey of his fellow students at York High School using the online SurveyMonkey site. He stated that 186 students responded and 144 completed the entire survey. He noted that many of his survey mirrored the results of scientific survey and reiterated the importance of walkability, good schools, addressing sea level rise, and concerns about overdevelopment.

Mr. Seiter asked Mr. Rizzio if students talk about global warming and climate change, and Mr. Rizzio responded that it is a widely shared concern among the students. Mr. Green asked what time school starts and Mr. Rizzio answered 7:20 a.m., adding that students have different sleep patterns than adults and tend not to fall asleep until after 11:00 p.m. He stated that moving the start of school to a later time could help increase student productivity. Mr. Brooks asked if three

schools sharing a sports field was a concern of students in school and Mr. Rizzio said it did not seem to be a big concern.

Community Outreach Meetings

Chairman King asked Mr. Cross to provide a recap on the Committee's Community Outreach Meetings that were held in May and June. Mr. Cross responded that there were a total of four public outreach meetings with a total combined attendance of slightly more than thirty people, not including Committee members and staff. Mr. Cross said there was good dialogue and the attendees provided many written comments, which were included in the meeting agenda package. Mr. Cross added that while some of the comments were not relevant to the Comprehensive Plan they could be explored in other venues.

Committee Discussion

Mr. Seiter commented that the low turnout at the public outreach meetings might be a sign that County residents are generally satisfied. Gail Whittaker, Public Information Officer, added that she believes another fact is that residents are now communicating differently than they did in the past. Instead of phoning, they are more likely to send emails or leave comments on social media.

Chairman King stated that ultimately it will be the citizens of York County that will carry the load to implement change. Mr. Green expressed that as the committee moves closer toward producing a draft Plan, more residents will become involved.

Discussion of Meeting Time

Mr. Cross stated that Mr. Henegar, who recently resigned from the Committee, was the only member who had previously indicated that he could not attend meetings earlier than 7:00 p.m., so this item was placed on the agenda to give the members an opportunity to discuss the possibility of meeting earlier in the day. Following discussion, Mr. Green suggested changing the meeting time to 5:00 p.m. and if that proves to be a problem for some people, it can be moved to 5:30 or 6:00.

Chairman King reminded everyone that the next meeting is scheduled for September 4th at the Public Works Multi-Purpose Room.

Other Business

No other business was presented.

Citizen Comment Period

There were no citizen comments.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.