

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.

MEETING NOTES
York 2040 Committee

Wednesday, September 4, 2019 – 5:00 p.m.
Public Works Multi-Purpose Room
105 Service Drive, Yorktown, Virginia

Members Present: Mark Bellamy, Gregory “Skip” Brooks, Leigh Houghland, Montgoussaint “Montee” E. Jons, Michael S. King, Vivian McGettigan, Richard Myer, Sheila L. Myers, R. Anderson Moberg, Jacob Rizzio, Eugene Seiter, and Cowles “Buddy” Spencer

Staff Present: Neil Morgan, County Administrator; Susan Kassel, Director of Planning and Development Services; Timothy Cross, Deputy Director of Planning and Development Services; Earl Anderson, AICP Senior Planner; Amy Parker, Senior Planner; Daria Linsinbigler, Planning Assistant; Gail Whittaker, Public Information Officer

Member Absent: Chad Green

Call to Order

Chairman King called the meeting to order at approximately 5:00 p.m. and welcomed the Committee members and visitors.

Approval of August 7, 2019 Meeting Notes

The August 7, 2019 meeting notes were unanimously approved with a few minor revisions.

Comments from the County Administrator

Neil A. Morgan, County Administrator, gave an update of the County’s preparations for the approaching hurricane with a brief description of the latest weather models and forecast. He noted that the weather is subject to change and is being closely monitored.

Mr. Morgan thanked the members for the time and effort they are dedicating to the Comprehensive Plan update, stating that he has heard good things about the members’ attendance and the quality of their input. He stated that the Committee is near the mid-point of the review process and that it is going to get more difficult when it begins to grapple with developing actual policy recommendations. He noted that although great efforts have been made to generate citizen participation and input, most of the citizen input in the process is going to come from the Committee. Mr. Morgan added that eventually, once a draft updated Plan has been prepared, citizens are likely to come out to complain about various Committee recommendations, and that at that point, it will be important for the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors to hear from Committee members who have invested so much time and effort in this process. He added that he would welcome the opportunity to return when the Committee begins to discuss policy questions.

Mr. Spencer commented that Mr. Morgan made some important points and that he agrees.

Chairman King agreed, adding that it will be important for the Committee members to step up and defend the Plan. He thanked Mr. Morgan for his comments.

Presentation: York County Environmental Programs

Anna Drake, Stormwater Engineer II, and Amy Green, Stormwater Engineer II, gave a presentation on County Environmental Programs administered by the Department of Public Works covering the following topics:

- York County MS4 Permit
- Stormwater Capital Improvement Plans (CIP)
- Stormwater Construction Crew
- Stormwater and Erosion and Sediment Control (E&SC)
- Wetlands
- Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area (CBPA)
- Watershed Management and Protection (WMP)
- Floodplain

Ms. Drake explained that the County is mandated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to achieve established Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) limits for discharges into the waters of the United States. She described various stream restoration projects and Best Management Practice (BMPs) undertaken by the County to achieve the required reductions. She explained that for water pollution, the term “BMP” includes any structural, vegetative, or managerial practice used to treat, prevent, or reduce water pollution. She used the example of stormwater detention and retention ponds, which will hold the water until pollutants settle to the bottom instead of flowing directly into a waterway.

Ms. Green gave an overview of the County’s Stormwater and Erosion and Sediment (E & S) Control Ordinances, which are enforced by the Department of Public Works. She added that the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) conducts a review of the County’s enforcement efforts every five years. She provided details of the various permitting and inspection requirements and gave examples of BMPs for both quality and quantity control.

Ms. Drake discussed the County’s wetlands regulations, explaining the difference between tidal and non-tidal wetlands as well as the respective roles of the County Wetlands Board, the Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC), and the Army Corps of Regulations through the Joint Permit Application process. She also provided examples of different wetlands protection projects that have been undertaken in the County. Noting that the Governor has issued an Executive Order stipulating “no net loss of wetlands,” Ms. Drake said that the Virginia Marine Resources Commission conditionally approves bulkheading but prefers waterfront properties to have a living shoreline.

Ms. Drake spoke about the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act, which is a state law that is administered by localities. She explained that the County’s performance in implementing the Act is reviewed every five years by the DEQ. She gave an overview of the Chesapeake Bay RPA (Resource Protection Area) and RMA (Resource Management Area) buffer requirements and the role of the County’s Chesapeake Bay Board.

Ms. Drake discussed the Watershed Management and Protection Area overlay district provisions of the Zoning Ordinance, which include special development standards designed to protect the various reservoirs in the County. She also discussed the County's floodplain ordinance, which is also embedded in the Zoning Ordinance and is enforced by both the Building Regulation Division and the Stormwater staff.

Committee Discussion

Mr. Myer stated that it is a real burden for homeowners' associations to bear the high costs associated with maintenance of stormwater ponds.

Ms. Drake acknowledged the concern of high costs and said homeowners' associations are still held liable and the County can fine or take them to court to enforce codes. She said education for new development planning is key.

Mr. Myer asked if the County has inspectors who go out into the field to detect or eliminate violations.

Ms. Drake answered that the system is primarily complaint-driven with no policing efforts.

Mr. Seiter said that even though he lives in a neighborhood with a homeowners' association, of which he serves on the Board of Directors, he has never heard the term "BMP" before. He stated that it might be because he lives in an older subdivision that does not have any stormwater ponds, and he added that it might be a good idea to provide some education to the homeowners associations.

Ms. Whittaker stated that information about BMP maintenance has previously been published in the *Citizen News*, which is mailed quarterly to all County residents, and that this might be a good time to publish the information again to make sure the associations are aware.

Ms. Drake noted that inspectors will contact home owners associations when there is a reported problem. She said that the DEQ sets the goals and localities can be fined for not meeting them.

Mr. Seiter asked how individual homeowners contribute to pollution.

Ms. Drake cited various examples, such as dumping oil, paint, or hazardous chemicals into the ground, over-fertilizing their lawn, and not cleaning up their animal waste.

Mr. Brooks asked if the County informs landscaping companies hired for homeowners' associations of ways to reduce pollution.

Mr. Bellamy said that homeowners' associations should employ reputable landscaping companies that are green-certified and test the soil before adding nutrients.

Ms. Drake noted that County-owned property has soil testing to prevent over-fertilization and that the County plants drought-resistant native vegetation. She added that the goal is to further reduce pollution, and the projects are funded by the meals tax and the Stormwater Local Assistance Fund (SLAF).

Mr. Spencer asked if any grants are available to homeowners' associations.

Ms. Drake answered that she is not aware of any but that the availability of grants might be posted on the DEQ website.

Ms. McGettigan noted that one of the County stormwater projects mentioned by Ms. Drake required geese to be removed, and she asked how the County accomplished that.

Ms. Drake responded that through trial and error, it was determined that the best solution was to let the grass grow tall within ten feet of the water.

Mr. Rizzio asked if there are any plans to reduce pollution by planting trees and vegetation.

Ms. Drake said that the County does not have a tree planting program, but new developers have the opportunity to plant and obtain credits.

Mr. Bellamy added that each new project completed by the County has an unknown number of costs to keep it maintained. He also noted that taking septic systems offline and connecting homes to public sewer would result in credits.

Chairman King asked what the County policy is for pumping out septic systems.

Ms. Drake answered that residents are required to have septic systems pumped out and inspected every five years and that most homeowners comply after the first or second notice.

Chairman King said that he is aware of at least one defunct septic system that was not filled with sand and crushed.

Mr. Bellamy noted that before they are allowed to connect to the County's public sewer system, homeowners must provide proof that the septic system has been properly abandoned.

Chairman King spoke about a demonstration project by the Hampton Roads Sanitation District (HRSD). He said the decision to release treated water directly into the ground to replenish the underground water supply is efficient but is driven by economics. Mr. Spencer asked if York County is addressing the issue of rising sea levels.

Ms. Drake answered that homeowners are allowed to build berms as long as lawns are buffered with native vegetation and wetlands are not filled in. She further stated that a home located in a flood zone can be rebuilt on the same footprint.

Chairman King asked Ms. Drake to name three important environmental goals or initiatives that she believes should be addressed in the updated Comprehensive Plan.

Ms. Drake responded that sea level rise is a major concern, which she felt can be partially mitigated through the establishment of a fill bank to provide owners of property in low-lying areas, such as Seaford, access to low-cost fill material. She added that other important goals and strategies are to combat invasive species, both flora and fauna, with the planting of native species of vegetation and to address the issue of stormwater pond maintenance.

Mr. Seiter stressed the importance of giving information to the community and perhaps incorporating it into the schools' curriculum.

Other Business

Chairman King reminded everyone that the next meeting is scheduled for October 2nd at the Public Works Multi-Purpose Room.

Citizen Comment Period

There were no citizen comments.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:11 p.m.