

MEETING NOTES
York 2040 Committee

Monday, January 6, 2020 – 5:00 p.m.
Public Works Multi-Purpose Room
105 Service Drive, Yorktown, Virginia

Members Present: Mark Bellamy, Chad Green, Leigh Houghland, Montgoussaint “Montee” E. Jons, Vivian McGettigan, Richard Myer, Sheila L. Myers, Jacob Rizzio, Eugene Seiter, Cowles “Buddy” Spencer

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

Members Absent: Gregory “Skip” Brooks, Michael S. King, R. Anderson Moberg,

Call to Order

Vice Chairman Jons called the meeting to order at approximately 5:00 p.m. and welcomed the Committee members and guest speakers.

Approval of December 4, 2019 Meeting Notes

The December 4, 2019 meeting notes were approved unanimously.

York County Public Facilities, Part 2

Brian Fuller, Director of Community Services, gave a presentation on York County parks and recreation facilities and programs, explaining that Bonnie Fitz, Parks and Recreation Manager, prepared the presentation and was planning to present it but was called away suddenly by a family emergency. He explained that tourism programs used to fall under the Parks and Recreation Division but that because of growth in the number and importance of these programs, a separate Tourism Development Division was created. He reported that many different youth recreation programs are offered by the Parks and Recreation Division, including soccer, tennis, basketball, sport and outdoor recreation camps, summer programs, and a variety of fitness classes. Adult programs, he stated, include various leisure and instructional classes and sporting programs. In addition, he stated that some programs have been eliminated because of funding constraints, and he added that the County provides facilities and scheduling to volunteer organizations that host additional programs available to the community.

Mr. Fuller spoke about the County’s park and recreation facilities. He stated that the Senior Center operates out of leased space in Washington Square shopping center, which has allowed for expansion of senior programs, extension of hours/days and multi-generational programs. Ms. McGettigan asked Mr. Fuller to confirm that the 19,369 visitors to the Senior Center represented the number of individual visits and not the number of separate individuals who visited; Mr. Fuller said that is correct. Mr. Spencer inquired about the size of the expanded center, and Mr. Fuller answered that it is about 8,880 square feet.

Mr. Fuller stated that for upper County residents recreational programs are available through partnerships with Williamsburg and James City County. He explained that for many York County programs, the school/park concept provides for the sharing of facilities, providing gymnasiums, playgrounds, athletic fields, and tennis and basketball courts for community use, which maximizes use of the school sites. He spoke of the challenges surrounding athletic field reservations, including inadequate school facilities, scheduling conflicts, overused fields and year-round use approvals. He stated that some indoor facilities in the County are operated by other agencies, including the Victory YMCA in Tabb, the R.F. Wilkinson Family YMCA in Lightfoot, and the York County Boys and Girls Club.

Mr. Fuller stated that the County has 11 parks and 77 athletic fields along with several non-County owned parks available for use and he spoke about the various facilities available at each of them. Mr. Seiter asked about the possibility of partnerships with local military bases to access more recreational areas. Mr. Fuller replied that the County worked with consultants on this subject for over 2½ years but that base access proved to be an issue. Mr. Anderson pointed out that there has been very little change to the number of County recreational facilities since 2009. Mr. Fuller noted that the County currently leases 70 acres of land from Newport News Waterworks for the McReynolds Athletic Complex. He said that parks or sports fields can also be developed prior to a school being built on a future school site, as was the case with Kiln Creek Park. He added that after studying various tennis courts and several trials of offering tennis lessons, underused courts were converted to playgrounds for increased use.

Mr. Fuller said the County has added electric car charging stations in several locations. Mr. Bellamy added that the addition of two spaces in the Tabb area helped the County to receive \$4.5 million in SMART SCALE transportation funds for widening a segment of Victory Boulevard. Mr. Jons asked if it is possible to calculate how many times charging stations are being used and Mr. Bellamy replied that the usage amount is not currently being captured. He added that the state just recently allowed counties to charge fees for this service. Mr. Green added that a full charge for an electric vehicle typically costs the County about \$3.50 and although the County does not charge the recipient, it is the hope that they utilize local shopping and restaurants while waiting.

Mr. Fuller spoke about water access and greenways and the need for a master plan for parks and recreation to address these and other needs. Lastly, he presented the following recommendations for the future:

- Develop parks and recreation master plan
- Review the need for a recreation center in the County
- Technology in parks and programs
- Assess the need for land acquisition
- Installation of synthetic turf on athletic fields
- Construction of a splash pad
- Development of plans for facilities on County-owned land at Seaford Elementary School as well as the future Marquis school site

Kristi Olsen, Manager of Tourism Development, gave a presentation on York County tourism programs and activities. She spoke about the evolution of tourism in the County since the

formation of the Yorktown Revitalization Steering Committee in 1988 and the Yorktown Master Plan Process that followed, which laid the groundwork for development of the Yorktown Riverwalk and other improvements intended to enhance Yorktown's presence and its position in the historic triangle. She noted the evolution of events in Yorktown over the years, ranging from parades to celebrating the 400th Jamestown Anniversary to outdoor concerts and movies to Yorktown Market Days.

Ms. Olsen said it was soon realized that an event planner was needed to schedule and coordinate events. She spoke about the emergence of the Freight Shed as a popular wedding venue with steady revenue growth and bookings scheduled two years in advance. She reported that many tall ships and cruise lines dock at the Riverwalk Pier, bringing visitors with disposable income to spend in the local area. She added that there have been many requests for waterfront media permits for filming television series and documentaries. With the increased activity in the busy waterfront area came the need for parking attendants and waterfront ambassadors to navigate vehicle traffic/parking and aid people during key beach days and large events.

Ms. Olsen stated that the Yorktown trolley system is in its twentieth year of service and that a new fourth trolley has been added featuring a state-of-the-art "infotainment" system. She added that a spot tracking system app is available to track the trolley's location and the estimated time of arrival. She stated that the Tourism Development office employs a team of seven and has recently move to the former Redcoat Antiques building in the Yorktown village. She said that many community partners collaborate with the County to enhance Yorktown's presence and promote it as a popular destination to visit.

She stated that the adopted Capital Improvement Program (CIP) includes funding for a new dockmaster's building and other potential projects, such as a permanent structure behind the Freight Shed and a permanent event stage. In addition, she stated, funding requests have been submitted for a wayfinding master plan and signage; improvements to the Yorktown fishing pier, a public address system, and open wireless broadband service at the waterfront.

Ms. Olsen stated that future ideas for consideration include new waterfront amenities, additional parking, promoting Main Street, continuing ADA accessibility improvements, and enhancing visitors' trolley experiences. Ms. Myers spoke of the need for a permanent stage to accommodate larger productions. She inquired if bus service between Williamsburg and Yorktown is still provided. Ms. Olsen responded that this service was canceled once the grant funding expired but that there is discussion among the localities about reestablishing it. Mr. Jons asked if the Williamsburg Tourism Council is helpful and Ms. Olsen replied that it is extremely vital and funds most projects on the waterfront.

Stephen Kopczynski, Fire Chief, gave a presentation on the York County Department of Fire and Life Safety, the mission of which is to provide protection and safety to the community, to prevent emergencies when possible, and to minimize pain, suffering, and loss when emergencies do occur. Mr. Spencer asked why ambulances responding to an emergency are usually accompanied by a fire truck. Chief Kopczynski responded that serious medical situations may require the application of multiple procedures and that the additional assistance provided by department members from the fire engine often accelerates the patient care and treatment process as well as reduces the time it takes the patient to reach the hospital. In addition, he noted, in some cases the closest ambulance may be committed to another incident, in which case the closest fire

engine responds to provide patient care and treatment until the next available ambulance arrives.

Chief Kopczynski described the organization of the department and the activities and responsibilities of each of its divisions, which are Fire and Rescue Operations, Prevention and Community Safety (including Animal Services), Technical Services and Special Operations, Support Services, and Emergency Management. He stated that there are currently two district fire stations in the County (Grafton, which was recently located from Route 17 to a brand new, much larger facility on Dare Road, and Bruton) and four satellite stations (Tabb, Yorktown, Skimino, and Seaford).

Chief Kopczynski presented the following statistics related to the Department of Fire and Life Safety:

- Approximately 12,000 fire rescue response/incidents annually
- Over 23,000 unit responses
- Average response time of about 5 minutes
- Over 50,000 hours of training annually
- Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating of 2/2Y, which is in the top 2.5% in Virginia and the top 3% Nationally

Ms. Myers asked if the estimate of 12,000 calls is normal and Chief Kopczynski responded that is a relatively average number that changes based on demographics and aging housing stocks. He said there is a balance working with developers for compliance to reduce risks and minimize damage caused by large storms. He indicated that York County has a significant wildfire risk because of the proximity of subdivisions located near large wooded tracts. He added that the railroad, highways, air travel, and waterways present special risks for the County.

Chief Kopczynski spoke about issues, challenges, and needs facing the Department of Life Safety in the future, including the need for a new fire station somewhere in the Mooretown Road/Bypass Road area, the need for additional administrative and classroom training space, a dedicated emergency operations center, and renovation of older facilities. In addition, he stated that the Tabb Fire Station service area has an inordinately high number of incidents for a satellite station, which will need to be addressed at some point. Lastly, he stated that the aging of the population is dictating a need for changes in facilities and emergency response service.

Amy Parker, Senior Planner, gave a presentation on historic resources in York County. She outlined the various existing historic resources in the County, which include architectural and archaeological resources, Virginia Landmark Register and National Register of Historic Places, museums, historic trails, historical highway markers, and interpretive signage.

She stated that the overall goal is to identify, preserve, protect, and enhance the County's existing and future historical resources. The specific objectives and strategies for achieving that goal, she said, include updating historic resource databases, maintaining cemetery inventories, public education, promoting heritage tourism, recognition of African-American history, and participation in commemoration programs. Ms. Parker spoke about the different museums available to the community, including the newly opened American Revolution Museum at

Yorktown, and she stressed that coordination with the Divisions of Tourism and Parks and Recreation, and other historic agencies, is key.

Ms. Parker spoke about the many historic commemoration events that are sponsored, including, most recently, an event to honor World War II veterans that was held in tandem via simulcast with a similar event held in Richmond. She noted that stories from World War II York County veterans have been recorded and are now stored at the Library of Congress. She said the Tourism Development Division, Historical Committee, and the York County Museum coordinate with local, regional, and national organizations, which enables the County to produce large-scale exhibits like the upcoming 250th Anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

Mr. Myer asked if there are any web-based applications whereby someone can visit the York County Tourism web site to see where the historical markers are and what they say. Ms. Parker replied that there is no such application at this time but that apps for historical markers do exist. She said that she is hopeful that enhanced maps along trails will be added with touch kiosks, and she added that it is important to establish markers for bicycle touring. She said grant funding for public education provides items for exhibits and that one of the current Comprehensive Plan's recommendations is to continue to seek grants. She concluded by saying that the National Park Service has allowed use of the Medical Shop building (located next to York Hall), which will house an exhibit on the history of African-American life in York County slated to open in February.

Committee Discussion

There was no further committee discussion.

Other Business

There was no other business discussed.

Citizen Comment Period

There were no citizen comments.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:28 p.m.