



DRAFT
TOWN COUNCIL
Regular Meeting
St. Charles Parish Hall
September 13, 2012
6:00 p.m.

At 6:00 p.m. Vice Mayor Chris Bannon, having established a quorum, called to order the Regular Meeting of the Town Council. In addition to Vice Mayor Bannon, present were Councilmen Godwin, Sullivan, Veber and Wendell and Councilwoman Natali. Mayor Sullivan was not in attendance. Also in attendance were Town Manager Heather Arcos, Assistant Town Manager Bob Panek, Town Planner Tom Bonadeo and Town Clerk Libby Hume as well as the Department Heads and approximately 30 members of the public.

Vice Mayor Bannon gave the invocation followed by the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Vice Mayor Bannon requested all attendees to please remember Harbor Master Smitty Dize whose father passed away over the weekend.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Becky Creed, 548 Monroe Avenue
Please see attached.

Lisa Harman, 104 Madison Avenue
Ms. Harman deferred her allotted time to Wayne Creed.

Rachel Creed, 548 Monroe Avenue
Ms. Creed deferred her allotted time to Wayne Creed.

Wayne Creed, 548 Monroe Avenue
Mr. Creed began by expressing how proud he was of the work done by his wife, Ms. Becky Creed and continued to talk about the underprivileged residents of the Shore. Mr. Creed read an excerpt from an email dated February 27, 2012 from Bob Panek regarding Section 8 housing and went on to talk about clause 15.F. in the contract regarding Section 8 housing and his desire to give the old school building to the poor. Mr. Creed went on to state that Councilman Wendell was instrumental in forming the Bayview Citizens for Social Justice group and the Harbor, The Shanty and the Bay Creek Resort Development would not be here without Councilman Wendell's past efforts. Mr. Creed stated that Council knew how important the old school building was to Councilman Wendell and his family and he did not understand why Council did not notify Councilman Wendell when the proposal was received for the school building. Mr. Creed went on to state that a community center would make a small difference in a lot of people's lives. Mr. Creed stated that he sometimes was out of line and apologized for things he had said to or about people. Mr. Creed concluded by stating that he felt that a community center would make a difference in this Town and by working together, we could make it happen.

Don Bender, 300 Fulcher Street
Mr. Bender deferred his allotted time to Deborah Bender.

Deborah Bender, 300 Fulcher Street

Ms. Bender began by talking about the August 23, 2012 meeting, noted events from the meeting that were not included in the minutes and an item that was not depicted accurately. Ms. Bender went on to talk about an incident that occurred after the meeting between Mr. Malcolm Hayward, a Council member and the president of Old School Cape Charles (OSCC) and added that Mr. Hayward needed to be removed from the Planning Commission. Ms. Bender distributed a copy of the reservation form for the Cape Charles Lofts which showed options for both one and two-bedroom units and asked how many of each were being built in the old school building adding that Echelon was paying fees for one-bedroom units. Ms. Bender stated that Echelon represented themselves as “men of honor” but Mr. J. David McCormick owed the Town of Blackstone \$38K for tap fees. The Cape Charles contract with Echelon stated that the Town’s tap fees would be paid prior to issuance of the Certificate of Occupancy which was against the Town Code. What would happen if Echelon claimed they did not have the money to pay the Town’s fees? Ms. Bender stated that there was still time for the Town to back out of the Echelon contract and asked that Council “do the right thing” and give the building to OSCC for a community center. Ms. Bender added that this issue had alienated the citizens of the Town, which was wrong, but it was also wrong to turn the school building into apartments and concluded by asking Council to give the citizens a community center.

Lenora Mitchell, 309 Tazewell Avenue

Ms. Mitchell began by stating that she hated racism and discrimination and added that she was angry and saddened when she read the email that Mr. Creed referred to at the August 23, 2012 meeting. Ms. Mitchell went on to talk about the language in the contract with Echelon regarding Section 8 housing and mentioned the difficulty in finding land to build affordable housing for the working class people, which was not considered low-income housing. Ms. Mitchell stated that she believed the Council’s actions were illegal and added that she was going to send a request to the Fair Housing Agency in Richmond, VA and in Philadelphia, PA and ask them to look at the contract and emails. Ms. Mitchell stated that there were three districts in Town – the Harbor, Planned Unit Development and the Historic District and Council was not representing the people of the Historic District. Ms. Mitchell concluded by stating that the working class people were being taxed without representation.

Veann Duvall, 110 Tazewell Avenue

Ms. Duvall began by stating that the Friends of the Cape Charles Memorial Library asked for a location for a larger library and the Town purchased the Bank of America property for the expansion of the Library. Ms. Duvall continued to state that the Friends of the Old School were asking for the former school building, which was used as a community center a couple of years ago, and distributed a copy of a recent article in the Eastern Shore News written by Ms. Deborah Bender. Ms. Duvall stated that Council may have read the article but asked that they read it again and give the school back to the people.

Brock Stiles, 525 Madison Avenue

Mr. Stiles deferred his allotted time to Councilman Frank Wendell.

Frank Wendell, 515 Monroe Avenue

Councilman Wendell distributed copies of the August 29, 2012 issue of the Courier Record from Blackstone, VA and read excerpts from an article regarding unpaid water and sewer tap fees owed by Mr. Dave McCormack for an apartment building in the Town. Councilman Wendell went on to talk about statements made by the Council at the June 14, 2012 meeting when Council approved moving forward with the sale of the school building. Councilman Wendell continued to state that this school project had the townspeople torn up and added that many real estate deals did not go to closing and recommended Council not to proceed to closing on

the contract. Councilman Wendell distributed several other handouts including a Wikipedia definition of the word “misfeasance,” a page printed from the Old School Cape Charles website, and a copy of the June 29, 2012 letter from the Town to Mr. Kevin Martingayle, attorney representing OSCC and talked about each item in turn. Councilman Wendell stated that he showed the letter to the Commonwealth Attorney and was planning to meet with him again on the issue. Councilman Wendell went on to describe a variety of events that could be held in the community center and asked the Council to take a step back and not proceed with the closing for the sale of the school property which would bring the community back together. Councilman Wendell stated that OSCC was a civic group working to obtain their 501(c)3 status and asked Council to give them the same opportunities given to other organizations like the Library Board, Citizens for Central Park, New Roots Youth Garden, Arts Enter, the Historic Society, etc. and keep the 100-year old historic high school building a public/community asset.

Steve Bennett, 100 Creekside Lane

Please see attached.

Don Riley, 538 Monroe Avenue

Mr. Riley stated that he was going to defer his allotted time to Councilman Frank Wendell, but he had already spoken.

Bruce Evans, 645 Tazewell Avenue

Mr. Evans stated that he conceded his time.

There were no other public comments to be heard nor any other written comments submitted prior to the meeting.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Vice Mayor Bannon stated that a new item – Planning Commission Recommendation regarding the Bank of America Property was being added under Old Business as Item #6B. Vice Mayor Bannon went on to state that Mr. Ed Lewis, president of the Friends of the Virginia Waterman’s Memorial of the Eastern Shore was in attendance to give a presentation regarding a proposed waterman’s memorial so Item #7D under New Business was being moved to immediately follow the Report Presentations.

Motion made by Councilwoman Natali, seconded by Councilman Veber, to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was approved by unanimous consent.

The Town Council reviewed the minutes of the August 9, 2012 Regular Meeting, the August 23, 2012 Executive Session, the August 23, 2012 Public Hearing & Special Meeting and the August 28, 2012 Executive Session.

Councilman Wendell noted several areas in the August 23, 2012 Public Hearing & Special Meeting minutes where he wanted more details of the discussion to be included in the record and a couple of areas where he asked that the record be clarified.

Councilwoman Natali also noted areas where more details could be added if Council agreed.

There was much discussion regarding these minutes and Vice Mayor Bannon asked Councilman Wendell and Councilwoman Natali to submit the language they wanted to include in the minutes to the Town Clerk. Approval of the minutes from the August 23, 2012 Public Hearing & Special Meeting would be deferred until the October 11, 2012 meeting.

Motion made by Councilwoman Natali, seconded by Councilman Sullivan, to approve the minutes of the August 9, 2012 Regular Meeting, the August 23, 2012 Executive Session and the August 28, 2012 Executive Session as presented. The approval of the minutes for the August 23, 2012 Public Hearing & Special Meeting, would be deferred until the October 11, 2012 Town Council Regular Meeting as discussed. The motion was approved by majority vote with Councilman Veber abstaining.

REPORT PRESENTATIONS:

A. Treasurer's Report:

Treasurer Kim Coates reviewed the Treasurer's report dated August 31, 2012 which showed \$263,261 in the Bank of America checking account and \$403,726 in the Shore Bank account with the Total Cash on Hand at \$1,106,779. The report also showed Total Cash Held in Reserve at \$354,720. Kim Coates reviewed the Tax Collection Comparison for Fiscal Years (FY) 2012 and 2013 which showed that \$64,084 more was collected in FY 2013 as of August 31st with increases noted for golf cart decals, meals tax, real estate taxes, and transient occupancy tax.

Motion made by Councilwoman Natali, seconded by Councilman Wendell, to accept the Treasurer's Report as submitted. The motion was approved by unanimous consent.

B. Town Manager's Report:

Town Manager Heather Arcos reported the following: i) Staff held a kick-off meeting with representatives from the Virginia Department of Transportation Enhancement Program and Land Studio, PC beginning the design of Phase 2 – North Peach Street and Washington Avenue. An update would be provided at the October Council meeting; ii) Representatives from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) would be in Town on September 20, 2012 to visit the new Wastewater Treatment Plant and review its performance; iii) On September 23, 2012, she and Town Clerk Libby Hume will be attending the annual Virginia Municipal League (VML) Conference in Williamsburg; iv) Harbor Master Smitty Dize's father passed away over the weekend. Heather Arcos asked that he and his family be kept in everyone's prayers; and v) A Candidate Forum had been scheduled for October 25, 2012 at the Palace Theatre beginning at 6:00 p.m. Heather Arcos asked that all inquiries regarding Town matters be submitted in writing to the Town either via email or dropped off to the Town Clerk's office. The Town would respond in writing in a timely manner.

C. Planning Commission and Boards:

Town Planner Tom Bonadeo reported the following: i) There had been multiple tree and shrub removals this month on the South Port property. Tom Bonadeo visited the site on three different occasions. New vegetation would be planted to replace the ones that were being removed; ii) The Army Corps of Engineers approved the wetlands mitigation area for South Port which was important for the permit extension. An application for review by the Wetlands Board was expected for the area between the old and new wastewater treatment plants. The work would also be reviewed by the Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC); and iii) The Wave Attenuation Devices (WADs) project to protect the Bay Vistas subdivision and the Sea Breeze Apartments was completed. This was the first time this product was used in Virginia and the VMRC would be monitoring the WADs for sand build up. Tom Bonadeo stated that he had been checking the project and it appeared that about 4" of sand had already built up around the WADs.

D. Other Departmental Reports:

Officer Jim Pruitt gave an update of the memorial dedication service for fallen Officer James Taylor which was scheduled for October 10, 2012 at Central Park beginning at 2:00 p.m. Officer Pruitt stated that six of Officer Taylor's family members would be in attendance. Tents, chairs, a podium, sound system, a flag and a wreath were needed as well as a bag piper. Officer Pruitt explained the difficulty he was having in finding a bag piper and Councilman Godwin stated that he had some contacts and would help in finding a bag piper for the service. A number of law enforcement agencies would be participating in the service including agencies from Chincoteague, Onley, Onancock, Accomack County, Northampton County, Exmore, the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, Norfolk, Virginia Beach, the Coast Guard, Virginia State Police, agencies from Maryland, the FBI, Drug Enforcement Agency, Homeland Security, etc. Norfolk and the VMRC would be providing their Color Guards.

Vice Mayor Bannon asked if there were any questions regarding the other departmental reports. There were none.

NEW BUSINESS:

D. Virginia Waterman's Memorial:

Heather Arcos introduced Mr. Ed Lewis, president of the Friends of the Virginia Waterman's Memorial on the Eastern Shore, Inc., who presented information regarding the proposed memorial to Virginia's watermen who were lost at sea. Mr. Lewis stated that locations were offered in Oyster and Kiptopeke State Park but Cape Charles was the preferred location due to the Cape Charles Harbor, which was a working harbor, and the higher number of visitors to the Town which would increase the visibility of the memorial. The cost of the memorial would be higher if constructed in Oyster due to the flooding and if constructed in Kiptopeke State Park, visitors, even family members of lost watermen, would have to pay the admission fee in order to visit the memorial. Mr. Lewis showed a depiction and gave a description of the planned memorial.

Heather Arcos stated that Smitty Dize had met with Mr. Lewis regarding the proposed location which was the circular area in front of The Shanty.

Heather Arcos stated that the next step would be the completion of an application for the Harbor Area Review Board to review the area and design of the memorial.

Vice Mayor Bannon polled the Council members and all expressed their support of the Virginia Waterman's Memorial being constructed at the Cape Charles Harbor.

OLD BUSINESS:

A. National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Grant Update:

Assistant Town Manager Bob Panek gave an update on the NEA Grant which was recently awarded to Arts Enter Cape Charles. The Arts Enter requested \$75K from the grant with a \$175K project budget, but was awarded \$50K in the grant which left a \$25K shortfall. Representatives from the major stakeholders met to review options for mitigating the shortfall and recommended the following: i) \$10K grant from the Virginia Tourism Commission (VTC) to develop a new Cape Charles tourism oriented website, thus offsetting a portion of the promotional costs in the project budget; ii) \$10K in cash matches from additional stakeholders; and iii) \$5K in savings by piggy-backing the planning efforts to the Land Studio contract for the planning and design of the next phase of the community trail. Project expenses would be tailored to the funding ultimately realized.

Councilwoman Natali asked whether the Town's match for the NEA Grant would be increased. Bob Panek stated that the Town's commitment was \$25K over two years and \$12,500 was budgeted for this year. The Council expressed concurrence with the plan.

B. *Planning Commission Recommendation re: Bank of America Property:*

Heather Arcos stated that on July 26, 2012, the Mayor executed the Purchase and Sale Agreement for the Bank of America property and the Town's 30-day due diligence period would expire on September 14, 2012. As part of the due diligence, the Cape Charles Planning Commission reviewed the procurement of the Bank of America building and associated property and unanimously agreed that the general location and character of the Bank of America property was substantially in accord with the Comprehensive Plan for the use as a library, municipal services, public parking and access to an alleyway. The letter from the Planning Commission was included in the agenda packet for review prior to the meeting.

Vice Mayor Bannon read Resolution 20120913B – Accepting the Planning Commission Recommendation Regarding the Bank of America Building and Associated Properties.

Motion made by Councilwoman Natali, seconded by Councilman Sullivan, to adopt Resolution 20120913B – Accepting the Planning Commission Recommendation Regarding the Bank of America Building and Associated Properties. The motion was approved by majority vote. Roll call vote: Bannon, yes; Godwin, yes; Natali, yes; Sullivan, yes; Veber, yes; Wendell, no.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. *Fill Vacancies on Boards and Commission:*

Heather Arcos stated that there were a number of vacancies on the Cape Charles Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals and Historic District Review Board. The Town Council interviewed candidates who expressed their interest in serving on the Town's boards and commission and recommended the following appointments: i) For the Planning Commission – Mr. Andrew Buchholz, Ms. Sandra Salopek and Mr. William Stramm; ii) For the Board of Zoning Appeals – Mr. Eugene Kelly; and iii) For the Historic District Review Board – Ms. Theresa Strub.

Motion made by Councilwoman Natali, seconded by Councilman Veber, to appoint the individuals to the Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, and Historic District Review Board as discussed. The motion was approved by unanimous consent.

B. *Reappointment of Building Code Board of Appeals Member:*

Heather Arcos stated that the Building Code Board of Appeals consisted of five members and met on an as-needed basis to hear appeals concerning the Uniform Statewide Building Code. Each member served a term of five years. Mr. Steve Michel's term expired on September 10, 2012 and he expressed his interest in continuing his service on the Board for another term.

Motion made by Councilwoman Natali, seconded by Councilman Sullivan, to reappoint Mr. Steve Michel to the Building Code Board of Appeals for another five-year term. The motion was approved by unanimous consent.

C. *Resolution to Request VDOT Traffic Study:*

Heather Arcos stated that Council had discussed this issue in several past meetings. Council members had expressed their concern for the safety of residents and visitors travelling through the intersection of Randolph Avenue and Fig Street on golf carts and bicycles and

felt that this intersection needed to be made into a four-way stop before an accident occurred. The Town of Cape Charles did not own the roads and had no jurisdiction over the roads and placement of road signs. VDOT required a resolution be adopted before they would consider performing a traffic study which must be performed prior to placement of signage. A copy of the 2008 VDOT Traffic Study was included in the agenda packet for review by Council prior to the meeting. VDOT's findings were based on the number of cars travelling through the intersection over a 12-hour period by hour. The Traffic Study outlined the requirements for the placement of a stop light or multi-way stop and determined that this intersection did not meet any of the criteria. After the 2008 Traffic Study, VDOT's resolution to the matter was to remove the stop sign from the east-bound lane of Randolph Avenue exiting Town.

There was much discussion regarding the intersection and VDOT's requirements. Chief Brown stated that VDOT would only look at the recorded statistics for the number of accidents, etc. It was noted that the 2008 Traffic Study was performed during the winter months and in order to get an accurate picture of the volume of traffic in the Town, the study needed to be performed during the late spring or summer. It was suggested that the Town request VDOT perform a four-season traffic study of the intersection.

Tom Bonadeo stated that VDOT required a traffic study be performed before any changes would be made regarding signage or traffic patterns. The Town had worked for years trying to get the speed limit lowered on Old Cape Charles Road from 55 MPH to 25 MPH, but after VDOT performed their traffic study, the speed limit was lowered to 35 MPH. The last paragraph of Resolution 20120913 requested review of the intersection for a roundabout or a multi-way stop to ensure the safety of the residents and visitors to the Town. VDOT's 2020 plan included a roundabout for this intersection. It was also in VDOT's 2035 plan and VDOT now had a Roundabout Study Committee.

Councilwoman Natali stated that she had participated in the recent Walkability Tour of Cape Charles and the coordinator remarked that this intersection was a good candidate for a roundabout which slowed traffic down without requiring a stop. Councilman Natali went on to state that the Walkability Tour Report was due to be finalized soon and recommended that it be reviewed by the Council to see the recommendations for the Town.

There was some discussion regarding roundabouts and whether it would make it difficult for tractor trailers coming into or leaving the Town.

Heather Arcos stated that she would contact the local VDOT engineer to see if the Town could request the traffic study to be performed at a certain time of the year and report back to Council.

Motion made by Councilwoman Natali, seconded by Councilman Veber, to defer the decision regarding this issue until receipt of additional information from VDOT. The motion was approved by unanimous consent.

E. *Constitution Week Proclamation:*

Heather Arcos stated that the Mayor requested this item be placed on the agenda and went on to state that Constitution Week was an American observance to commemorate the adoption of the United States Constitution. The observance ran from September 17 through September 23 every year. The purpose of the observance week was to i) emphasize citizens' responsibilities for protecting and defending the Constitution, preserving it for posterity; ii) informing the people that the Constitution was the basis for America's great

heritage and the foundation for our way of life; and iii) encourage the study of historical events which led to the adoption of the Constitution on September 17, 1787.

Vice Mayor Bannon read Proclamation 20120913 Designating September 17-23, 2012 as Constitution Week in the Town of Cape Charles, Virginia.

Motion made by Councilwoman Natali, seconded by Vice Mayor Bannon, to adopt Proclamation 20120913 Designating September 17-12, 2012 as Constitution Week in the Town of Cape Charles, Virginia. The motion was unanimously approved. Roll call vote: Bannon, yes; Godwin, yes; Natali, yes; Sullivan, yes; Veber, yes; Wendell, yes.

F. Guidelines for Citizen Participation:

Heather Arcos stated that most localities had guidelines in place for citizen participation at meetings. Staff reviewed guidelines adopted by other jurisdictions in Virginia and compiled information for Council consideration. Heather Arcos requested Council review and discuss the draft guidelines and make a motion to either adopt the guidelines or schedule a work session for further discussion and review of the guidelines.

Motion made by Councilman Veber, seconded by Councilwoman Natali, to schedule a work session to review and discuss guidelines for citizen participation. The motion was approved by unanimous consent.

G. USDA Grant Application for Library Equipment:

Heather Arcos stated that she met with Ms. Peggy Jordan, Area Specialist with USDA Rural Development (USDA RD) to discuss possible grant/loan opportunities for equipment for the Library. USDA RD offered grants for up to \$25K for equipment needs, not rehabilitation of a building. The grant covered 75% of the total cost of equipment with a 25% Town match. Equipment covered under the grant included furniture, computers, shelving, copier, etc. If approved by Council, a grant application would be submitted immediately. Submission of the grant application did not commit the Town to the 25%. If the grant was awarded to the Town next year, a commitment by resolution would confirm the Town's desire to work with USDA on the grant. The USDA's funding year started October 1, 2012, but with this being an election year, the grant would probably not be awarded until spring 2013.

Motion made by Councilwoman Natali, seconded by Councilman Godwin, to authorize the Town Manager to submit a grant application to the USDA RD for equipment needs for the expansion of the new library. The motion was approved by unanimous consent.

H. Aid to Local Government -VML Request:

Heather Arcos stated that the VML requested all localities to adopt a resolution to support the restoration of State funding for aid to localities. For the past three (3) years, the Commonwealth of Virginia had budget surpluses totaling approximately \$1.4B. Even with the state having three (3) years of budget surpluses, state support for state-mandated and state priority programs had declined. Some examples were the decrease in the 599 Program which supported law enforcement efforts and the Line of Duty Act expense which was now the responsibility of the cities, towns and counties in Virginia. A draft letter to Governor McDonnell was also included in the agenda packet.

Motion made by Councilwoman Natali, seconded by Councilman Sullivan, to adopt Resolution 20120913A Supporting Restoration of State Funding for Aid to Localities as noticed and forgo reading of the Resolution. The motion was unanimously approved. Roll call vote: Bannon, yes; Godwin, yes; Natali, yes; Sullivan, yes; Veber, yes; Wendell, yes.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- September 27, 2012 – Town Council Work Session, 6PM at Town Hall
- October 5-7, 2012 – 20th Annual Birding & Wildlife Festival
- October 6, 2012 – Fall Festival sponsored by the Cape Charles Business Association
- October 8, 2012 – Town Offices closed in observance of Columbus Day
- October 10, 2012 – Dedication Service for Memorial for Officer James Taylor, 2PM at Central Park
- October 11, 2012 – Town Council Regular Meeting, 6PM at St. Charles Parish Hall
- October 25, 2012 – Candidate Forum, 6PM at Palace Theatre

Councilman Veber stated that he had been a member of the Town Council for eight years and felt that tremendous achievements had been made. Councilman Veber went on to state that some good things had happened to Cape Charles with everyone working together to make things happen. The Town had a great staff who worked very hard to do what was requested by Council and a great group of volunteers who gave their time to serve the Town. Councilman Veber announced that he was withdrawing as a candidate for the November 6, 2012 Special Election adding that he needed to concentrate on his business and thanked all his constituents for supporting him.

Motion made by Councilman Sullivan, seconded by Councilwoman Natali, to adjourn the Town Council Regular Meeting. The motion was approved by unanimous consent.

Vice Mayor Bannon

Town Clerk

**Town Council Regular Meeting
September 13, 2012
Comments Provided in Writing**

Becky Creed, 548 Monroe Avenue

Good afternoon, your honorable council members and Mayor Sullivan. I live at 548 Monroe Avenue in Cape Charles, and have lived in town full time since July of 2005.

I'd like to share my perspective regarding the need for a community center in Cape Charles. I am a clinical social worker, and the Clinical Director for an agency based out of Belle Haven, VA. Our agency provides mental health services primarily for children and adolescents. In my time with the agency, and since I've been living on the Shore, I've seen poverty to the extreme. I've also seen the middle class families move into Cape Charles, and move out of Cape Charles. At this point in time, how many families with school aged children are left? Not many. Why don't these families stay in Cape Charles? The school system is poor, unemployment rate is high, taxes are high, and there is very little in our town that is "family friendly" to keep our children constructively occupied.

As a mother myself, and as a social worker, I recognize that we cannot change the world, but, we could provide constructive activities for our children. There was a time when I thought we were moving in the right direction. We had a recreational director who was going to be stationed in the park, who would provide some supervision, provide sports equipment, facilitate and monitor activities in the park. And then, somehow, this plan disappeared. No offense to our current recreational director, but the activities that I see planned appear to neglect the older children and teenagers of our town. Perhaps because there is not a good space available for these activities?

In addition to this loss, we also lost the baseball field. Little league baseball was a very popular past time that allowed children in this part of the county a constructive, self-esteem building activity. On a Saturday morning, these baseball games played by the children, also attracted all ages to come and watch, but then, we lost this venue. Now the children have to be driven 20 miles north if they want to play baseball. This may not seem like a big deal to some folks, but there are many in our county who cannot manage the cost of transportation, or who do not own a vehicle at all. My son joined the pee-wee football league now offered in Nassawadox (along with soccer and baseball), but case in point; the football coach was usually late because he had to pick up 6-8 players from the southern part of the county since the parents weren't able to transport these children to the practices themselves. (I'm sure it could have been a bus load if a vehicle was available!) This scenario speaks volumes about the plight of the children in Northampton County. These children have so little to build on as a result of their multi-layered impoverished backgrounds. If the Town of Cape Charles could offer a community center that would provide some constructive activities, some opportunity for mentoring our youth, it would be an investment in the children, and an investment for the future of Cape Charles.

As for the need for lower cost housing, I have to wonder how many of you have taken your children "trick or treating" on Halloween? The tradition has become one where those of us with children pile onto golf carts to go collect our "treats" because only every seventh house in town seems to be occupied. Why would we need to add more housing when we cannot fill the homes that are already here? How many of you have had to find ways to entertain your children through the cold winter months, and the windy months of spring? It is truly a challenge for me and my family, and we have transportation and a reasonable income. What must it be like for those in our community who are less fortunate? Wouldn't it be nice to go bowling? To go ice skating? To go to an arcade? To go to a movie? A community center cannot offer all of these activities, obviously, but it could offer indoor basketball, arts and crafts activities, a computer lab, a job skills center, and an array of other organized activities.

With the lack of constructive activities and opportunities, comes the increase in petty crimes, increase in illegal drug use, increase in sexual promiscuity. It is my belief that if we provide an environment supportive of children and provide an environment that is inviting for families to live in, then we would not have so many empty houses. With an increase in families, we increase the population in our town, and increase the tax base, and ultimately improve the future of Cape Charles, by investing in our children. There is no truer statement then "It takes a village to raise a child." Let's make Cape Charles that village, and invest in raising our children. Let's create a community center in our central park that will be a place that brings all of us together in our efforts to invest in our children and the future of Cape Charles.

Steve Bennett, 100 Creekside Lane

Good evening.

I'm happy to see agenda item 7F regarding guidelines for citizen participation at Council meetings. While I am in agreement with most of the proposed guidelines, I ask that you consider two things; first I don't think a speaker should be limited to an agenda item or a non-agenda item. If they have time they should be allowed to speak to both. And secondly, I fully agree that time should not be donated to another, as all speakers should have equal representation. I would ask however, that you consider extending the time limit to 4 or 5 minutes, since not all items can be covered in 3 minutes.

My second topic is a non-agenda item. The acquisition of the Bank of America building and repurposing of the existing library provides us with the opportunity to expand the educational, recreational and social services available to our citizens. Before we move forward with plans, it is important to reach out to our citizens and understand their needs. I am particularly concerned that we seek to identify ways to enhance the quality of life for our senior citizens, many of whom can become isolated as their mobility declines in their later years.

I am asking the Council to establish an advisory committee to identify the needs of our community and inventory our existing assets. This will allow us to better design the physical spaces we will now have available and better define the programs necessary to fill these unmet needs. This committee should reach out and involve citizens from all neighborhoods, organizations, and groups. It should also explore opportunities for program funding.

I am willing to serve as chair of this committee and help recruit other citizens to serve pending your approval.

Thank you,
Steve Bennett
100 Creekside Lane