



CAPE CHARLES TOWN COUNCIL & NORTHAMPTON COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Joint Meeting

Cape Charles Civic Center

October 25, 2016

6:00 p.m.

At approximately 6:00 p.m., Mayor George Proto noted that a quorum could not be met but since there was no action to be taken and with the Northampton County Board of Supervisors in attendance, discussion could continue. In addition to Mayor Proto, present were Vice Mayor Bannon, Councilman Buchholz, and Councilwoman Natali. Councilmen Bennett and Brown and Councilwoman Sullivan were not in attendance. Also present were Town Manager Brent Manuel, Assistant Town Manager Bob Panek and Town Clerk Libby Hume. There were 12 members of the public in attendance.

Chairman Spencer Murray called to order the recessed meeting of the Northampton County Board of Supervisors. In attendance were Supervisors Bennett, Duer, Hogg and LeMond, Acting County Administrator John Andrzejewski, and Assistant to the County Administrator Janice Williams.

Mayor Proto expressed his appreciation to the Board of Supervisors for coming to Cape Charles this evening for this open dialogue between the town and county and hoped that this would be the beginning to ongoing cooperation to make the entire area a better place to live for all.

Chairman Murray agreed that neither one could survive and prosper without the other and hoped to move forward in the spirit of cooperation and strengthen the bonds with all towns.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

This was a somewhat informal meeting and each member of the Town Council and Board of Supervisors (BOS) were given an opportunity to express their opinions regarding the agenda topics.

Town Edge Zoning / Historic Town Entrance Overlay Corridor (HTE)

The Town Council comments were as follows: i) There was a strong opinion of the entrance coming into Cape Charles and it was vital that the BOS understand the town's concerns and be willing to work with the town regarding future development of the area along Routes 13, 184 (Stone Road) and 642 (Parsons Circle/Old Cape Charles Road) from Hardees to the Milestone Motel. Development along Route 13 would compete with the businesses in town; ii) Try to have the architecture of any development be more sympathetic to the historic nature and look of the town vs. metal buildings like Dollar General; iii) Make the entrance into town more appealing. The town did not want the entrance to look like the causeway into Chincoteague. This could be something that could come under the Main Street Initiative; iv) Cape Charles was the only town in Northampton County without a presence on Route 13 which put the town at a disadvantage. The town relied heavily on the county and BOS to help drive traffic into the town; v) Two years ago, the Town Council sent two letters expressing their concern regarding the town edge zoning – conditional use vs. by right use; and vi) Every town had interest in their town edge. Town Edge zoning needed to be developed for each town since many of the issues were different based on the town.

Chairman Murray read excerpts from two letters dated June 2, 2014 from former County Administrator Katherine Nunez to the Town Council regarding Resolutions 20140522 Supporting the Inclusion of the Historic Town Entrance Overlay Corridor in the Proposed 2014 Zoning Amendments Under Consideration by the Northampton County Board of Supervisors and 20140522A Supporting the Continuation of Planning Commission Involvement in the Special Use Permit Process in the Proposed 2014 Zoning Amendments Under Consideration by the Northampton County Board of Supervisors and continued as follows: i) The HTE language detailed a lot of purpose and intent and the recommended uses made sense. It was recommended that the town include information regarding

Route 642 with the progress of the new road; ii) In 2014, the BOS was heavily involved in rewriting the zoning ordinance and the county administrator did not feel that this information could be reviewed as part of the proposed zoning ordinance which was passed in December 2015. In April 2016, the zoning ordinance was amended integrating the 2000, 2009 and 2015 zoning and the Board was still working diligently to improve the zoning ordinance for its citizens and it included town edge. It was difficult to include a separate town edge ordinance for each town but he realized that “one size did not fit all.” The BOS was working with VACo regarding the new zoning ordinance; iii) Cape Charles did not have a presence on Route 13 but was the only town that had a beautiful beach and a lot going for it; and iv) The BOS could not control what was developed at the intersection of Routes 13 and 184. It was commercially zoned and the BOS could not stop an Olive Garden from building there if they so wanted. The BOS wanted the town’s businesses to prosper.

The BOS comments were as follows: i) The intersection of Routes 13 and 184 was viewed as the premier commercial area in the county. Although the BOS was sensitive to Cape Charles they didn’t want to see too many restrictions placed on the land regarding development; ii) Several of the BOS had previous discussion regarding rotating signs to get people into Cape Charles but Cape Charles had been discovered and the majority of the tourism over the summer was in Cape Charles; iii) The county zoning ordinance could possibly be modified to state that the area between mileposts 79 and 80 to generally reflect the architectural nature of Cape Charles. It was suggested that the Cape Charles Planning Commission should revisit the HTE ordinance language to include design criteria. Any idea was reasonable and the county was open to working together to make it work. The Cape Charles Planning Commission should work with Northampton County Zoning Administrator Melissa Kellam, the county administrator and Planner Peter Stith throughout the process and to get the document to the County Planning Commission. The county was also working on their Comprehensive Plan and portions of this document could possibly be integrated into their Comp Plan as well; iv) The BOS was working with citizens regarding derelict structures along Route 13 vs. just sending code enforcement letters to get the area cleaned up; v) Three economic studies had been done and the county needed to begin fulfilling some of the recommendations and investing in the county such as signage directing traffic into the town. A joint effort was needed to extend the tourism season, improve infrastructure, possibly extending the water and wastewater services outside of the town across Route 13 into Cheriton to enhance opportunities in the area; and vi) The county was working on a number of large issues, such as a new high school, jobs and workforce development, and needed the help of the towns and all citizens to see them to fruition.

There was some discussion regarding obtaining assistance from the Eastern Shore of Virginia Tourism Commission regarding ways to extend the shoulder season and getting more visitors to stay in town and in Northampton County.

Town Beach

There was discussion as follows: i) The Cape Charles Beach was a big draw in the county both for tourists and citizens. There were two beaches in the county, Kiptopeke and Cape Charles, but Cape Charles Beach was the only free public beach in the county; and ii) Supervisor Hogg commented that he would like to see donations of tracts of land into a land trust to create additional public beaches in the county. Mayor Proto added that this could be a good concept but beaches were expensive to maintain. The town budgeted annually for sand replenishment and cleaning.

Economic Development, Medical Care, Education

There was discussion as follows: i) Medical care and education strongly related to economic development. Medical care and education were the two most important things that needed to be addressed by the county and if these two things could be improved, the area would experience more economic development; ii) The BOS was working diligently on emergency medical services such as expanded EMS facilities, acquisition of another ambulance, a new medical transport facility, expanded internet service for tele-medicine. Four paramedics were added and the Medical/EMS budget was now \$1.6M out of the county’s total \$20M-21M budget. 80% of the calls were answered by a paid county staff person. A provision was just made to staff the Nassawadox facility during the day. There were four ambulances with the one in Machipongo being the back-up ambulance when one of the regular ambulances was busy. The hospital would be moving in February 2017 and the BOS was

working with Riverside and Rural Health to pull things together as best as possible. Riverside committed to leave a facility in Nassawadox. The BOS would not give up on the idea of a facility in the county where an ambulance could take a patient. Every rural area in the country had similar issues; iii) Northampton Medical Services Foundation was started. No fundraisers had yet been held but the Foundation had over \$200K and would work to someday attract an emergency facility to the county; iv) Rural Health purchased property in Eastville and would be expanding their facility and services with extended hours; v) The general public needed to be re-educated regarding what a 911 emergency was. Many calls were received from individuals with minor health issues or needing to see a doctor, etc. Public transportation was available for these types of routine calls; vi) Tele-medicine required high speed broadband internet service. It was critical for both counties to get high speed internet down to the necks; vii) Volunteers provided a tremendous service to the county but taxpayers still subsidized about \$500K for calls. The county billed for services, but there was a difference between billing and actually getting paid; viii) Many residents of lower Northampton County would be crossing the bay to Sentara Leigh in Virginia Beach. It was imperative that all residents of the county support the hospital in Onley in order to keep Riverside active in Northampton County; ix) Northampton High School was in need of repair and the county was looking to build a new school at some point. The School Board's budget was approximately \$21M and grew every year. The BOS had a plan to put money aside each year into an account for a new school complex; x) Northampton High School was no longer the county's emergency shelter. Nandua Middle School had been declared as our emergency shelter; xi) The quality of education needed improvement. If so, younger families with children would possibly move to the area. Lower Northampton County was conducive for people living here and commuting to work in Virginia Beach. All indications from the school board showed that all the county's schools were improving and student population was increasing; xii) The high bridge toll and lack of a workforce detracted economic development in our area; and xiii) Councilwoman Natali stated that a number of years ago, the town lowered its boat tax to \$.01 per \$100 to attract more boaters but the county's boat tax remained at \$.99 per \$100. With the Cape Charles Yacht Center in operation, she asked that the BOS consider a reduction to their boat tax to possibly attract mega yachts to dock in Cape Charles.

Mayor Proto thanked all attendees and added that it was a productive discussion and proposed another meeting in six months.

Motion made by Supervisor Duer, seconded by Supervisor Bennett, to adjourn the Northampton County Board of Supervisors meeting. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Motion made by Vice Mayor Bannon, seconded by Councilwoman Natali, to adjourn the Town Council Work Session. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

The meeting adjourned at 7:47 p.m.

Mayor Proto

Town Clerk