

Minutes
Essex County Planning Commission
Regular Meeting
July 5, 2022
7:00 P.M.

A regular meeting of the Essex County Planning Commission was held on July 5, 2022, at the Essex County School Board Office, Tappahannock, Virginia.

Present:

Dr. G. R. Quarles – Vice Chairman
Cheryl Evans
Angelo Stevens
Trent Taliaferro
Benjamin Scott Mundie

Absent:

David Jones - Chairman
Jean Segar

Also present:

Rob Hodges – Planning and Zoning Administrator
Kelly McKnight – Planning and Zoning Office Manager

CALL TO ORDER

Dr. G.R. Quarles, Vice Chairman, called the regular meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 7:00 pm.

ROLL CALL

Vice Chairman Quarles asked Ms. McKnight to call the roll. A quorum was met.

MEETING AGENDA

There were no changes to the meeting agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the June 7, 2022, Planning Commission meeting. AYES: 5 NAYES: 0 ABSENT: 2

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Vice Chairman Quarles opened the Public Comments session and as no one came forward to speak, closed the session.

PUBLIC HEARING

None.

OLD BUSINESS

Discussion for the Revision of the Essex County Comprehensive Plan

Vice Chairman Quarles stated that the Planning Commission was charged by the Board of Supervisors to talk about their goals for the Comprehensive Plan. He asked if there was any discussion on that.

Commissioner Mundie stated he spoke with Mr. Magruder about needing guidance and assistance updating the statistic on demographics of the county. Mr. Magruder would talk to the Board of Supervisors and Rob Hodges and get back with him.

Vice Chairman Quarles stated he went to the Board of Supervisors meeting and let them know before the meeting that they would be reaching out to them for their goals and visions for this project. Commissioner Evans asked if that was for the public hearing or just a general chat. He has not heard anything back.

Commissioner Mundie stated that one board member suggested having the Berkley Group look at it since they had done the last one.

Vice Chairman Quarles stated what would the Berkley Groups involvement be with the comprehensive plan. He asked if Rob had any updates on that. Rob did not have any updates.

Vice Chairman Quarles asked if there were any other updates on the Comprehensive Plan, Rob Hodges came to the podium.

Rob Hodges stated he had been at the Middle Peninsula Planning Commission meeting where they were discussing the sea level rise due to the climate change. He does have some resources that he can forward to each board member for that topic to see if it is something that we should add into our Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner Taliaferro asked the question if there has been any geological survey to confirm the average sea level or was there ever a benchmark established? Rob stated that this is the information that the state of Virginia is using for their planning. They have several scenarios and using the second most rise level for their planning. He is not sure about the benchmarks. Vice Chairman Quarles asked if they should proceed with Rob providing this information to the Board and they all agreed.

Commissioner Evans expressed concern for what the Board of Supervisors is asking the Planning Commission to do. They have not been told if a consulting group will be doing this. She expressed concern that the Planning Commission does not have the expertise to draft such a

plan. Vice Chairman Quarles had hoped for more responses to gather information. He will take the lead and talk with the Chairman to see how they would like to proceed.

Commissioner Evans discussed the process of the Berkley Group and what they would put into the plan. Using a template and asking Stakeholders to what their visions would be. She states that it is the Planning Commission Boards duty to give guidance to the Berkley Group and that Mr. Hodges would not be able to develop this plan on his own. Vice Chairman Quarles agreed that a directive is needed.

NEW BUSINESS

Vice Chairman Quarles opened New Business to discuss the County Comprehensive Plan. He states that Commissioner Evans suggested going through the plan one section at a time. He asked if that is something they want to begin tonight or to form a schedule for the next several months and continue to gather information on the direction and the goals that the Board has.

Commissioner Taliaferro stated that based on Commissioner Evans question he does not see going through it section by section right now. The goals and objectives are listed at the beginning of each section. Commissioner Evans says that the goals and objectives are acquired through stakeholders not the Planning Commission. The Berkley Group would need to acquire the data from the stakeholders in order to formulate the plan.

Vice Chairman Quarles stated that the Board of Supervisors would need to take the first step in consulting with and contracting with the Berkley Group. Commissioner Evans stated that before the Berkley Group there was the Regional Planning Committee that compiled the data and Commissioner Taliaferro was on that committee for review. Commissioner Taliaferro stated that they began to get through section by section but began losing staff. There was a lot of turn over in the 5-7 years that caused them to lose their way.

Rob Hodges came to the podium and stated that the data in the plan is not a hard thing to refresh based off the census. To get the current information from the Commissioner of the Revenue would need to be backed up on the Department of Agriculture and Forestry Department to see the amount of acreage of service since they are a couple years behind. Vice Chairman Quarles asked if that data is something that Mr. Hodges could do himself. Mr. Hodges does not see that as being hard but feels that the Berkley Group would need to do the surveys as there is not the staff for that. Mr. Hodges stated that if the ask him he could get the data updated possibly by the next time they wanted to get together.

Vice Chairman stated that as a Commission we need a starting point and with the Commissions approval they would like Mr. Hodges to refresh the data. Commissioner Mundie feels that while we can solve the data issue it is not an efficient use of time without clear direction. Commissioner Taliaferro asked if the Board of Supervisors has looked at the goals to see if they have a revision to see if they are outdated. He would ask the Board to review the goals for each section and let them know if they want to add or delete anything.

Commissioner Evans stated that the Berkley Group is the brainstorm to get the ideas and goals going. Commissioner Mundie feels that the place to start is to outline the process for the order they need to go. He says that they need to take what needs to be reviewed and take that to the Board. Commissioner Evans does not feel that the Commission could do this by themselves and that is where the Berkley Group comes in as impartial. She also feels that as Mr. Hodges can provide the data, the state code is the hard part, and the Berkley group could provide that since they do it for other jurisdictions as well.

Vice Chairman Quarles asked what the favor of the commission is, do we not discuss it anymore to address the board of supervisors to come up with a plan for how to proceed. Commissioner Mundie stated that would certainly be the better way to go. Commissioner Evans stated this is something that should be updated every five years.

Commissioner Taliferro stated that the Board may decide not to spend the money for a consulting group, and they may need to review it section by section. Commissioner Evans stated that the board chose to do the zoning ordinances first since they were out of date and now doing the Land Use. She asked if there was grant money to assist. Mr. Hodges stated that he was not sure about Grant money but that the Middle Peninsula has access to grant money, but he would check to see if it could be used for comprehensive plans.

Commissioner Evans asked about the Capital Improvements Plan. The Planning Commission started the capital improvements plan. For three years they had input in what was to be set as Capital improvements but this past year they did not have the opportunity to review what was asked. Have these things fallen off the side where they do not review any of those?

Vice Chairman Quarles said he would present this to the Chairman as an action item and to be place on next months meeting agenda. Commissioner Taliferro feels that the CIP was pushed to the side due to the zoning ordinance approval.

ADJOURN

Having no further discussion, a motion to adjourn was made and seconded. AYES: 5, NAYES: 0, ABSENT: 2

Chairman