TOWN COUNCIL
Town Hall Meeting
Cape Charles Civic Center, 500 Tazewell Avenue
May 27, 2025
6:00 PM

At 6:00 p.m. Mayor Adam Charney, having established a quorum, called to order the Town Council Town Hall Meeting. In addition to Mayor Charney, in attendance were Vice Mayor Buchholz, Councilmen Butta, Grossman and Newman, and Councilwomen Ashworth and Holloway. Also, in attendance were Town Manager Rick Keuroglian, former Town Manager John Hozey, Project Manager Bob Panek, Treasurer Marion Sofield, Planning & Zoning Administrator Katie Nunez, Planning Administrative Assistant Jack Steinmayer, and Town Clerk Libby Hume. There were 15 members of the public in attendance and 22 viewers on Facebook.

ORDER OF BUSINESS: NEW MUNICIPAL BUILDING OPTIONS

Town Manager Rick Keuroglian thanked all the attendees, adding that it meant a lot to have them here to provide their input this evening. We would begin with the history of where we were and explain the projects at hand. The goal was to look at the options and determine the best fit. He was new here, so it was easy for him to see things objectively. He wanted to set expectations. He was officially the town manager now. John Hozey prepared the presentations and was in attendance this evening. He wanted to look at each option with some perspective. He had some criteria, and it was up to Council to determine whether the option met or did not meet the criteria. In his observance in discussions, five things stood out to him. 1-Safety was a high priority - A safe place for staff, Town Council and community members, and the building conditions. There were major concerns in the current building. 2-Accessibility for community members. Our community was aging. The current building did not meet our needs. John Hozey added internal and external accessibility since the current building had no elevators and no capacity to add one. 3-Capability. Is the facility design for us to work efficiently and effectively. 4-Walkability. Some people liked the convenience of the Town Hall being downtown so they could walk to it. Moving could hinder the walkability. 5-Parking for staff, Council, community members, and for meetings. He also heard frequent comments about the character, fit and feel of the building/location. Town Hall needed to fit into the small-town charm, etc. He asked Council if these were correct, and added his preference for compatibility, continuity of services and having all services, including Council Chambers and archives, in one location. As we go through this process this evening, John Hozey will provide the history of where we have been and why it's taken so long to get here. After each option, we would stop and look at the criteria. This was really important and the highest priority for staff right now.

Councilman Grossman added fiscal responsibility as a sixth criteria.

Staff Presentation & Discussion with Council

John Hozey stated that staff identified that the current location had inadequate space. This had been a priority for the entire 5 years that he had been here. Post COVID, construction became chaotic. He had spent a lot of time on this 3 to 4 years ago trying to determine what made the most sense. Several options were no longer in play since they involved relocating the library. We had two big options – stay where we were and renovate the current Town Hall building or move. An architect evaluated all departments, talked to staff and programmed how much physical space was needed for current staff and for some growth. Based on that number, it was determined that the current Town Hall was too small. The police department, archives and Council Chambers would not fit. The only available property was the lot off of Cassatt Parkway. We also had the lot by the Keck Wells, but that was more remote with no water or sewer, so that was not an option. We discussed keeping the Town Hall and building a small building at Cassatt Parkway or building one larger building to accommodate everything. The Town Council decided to build one new building to house everything. This location was not convenient for walking. Looking at the options today, we could renovate the current Town Hall for about $2M to $3M and build a new building for the police department and archives, Council Chambers. The cost would be about the same as building one large building. If the construction market was not so crazy, we would have bid out the project already and possibly have a new Town Hall. During that time, another option became available. The Meatland property became a possibility about a year ago. He

negotiated with the owners for a year, and they agreed to sell the property at below market rate and owner finance. Then another idea came forward to lease the property from Trinity United Methodist Church.

Councilman Grossman noted that the Randolph Avenue lots had not been considered.

John Hozey stated that they had been discussed but Council had purchased those lots to preserve the look coming into town. It was kept park-like with New Roots Youth Garden being across the street. It would also be a tight fit at that location.

Councilwoman Holloway asked about the square footage that was determined.

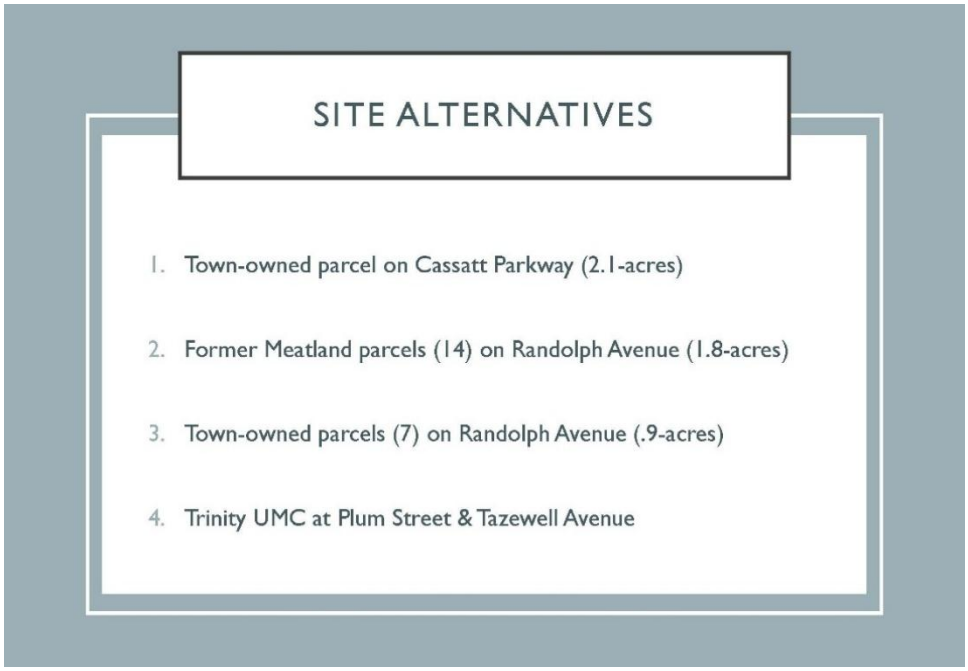
Bob Panek responded that the net square footage was around 4K square feet, without hallways, entrances, restrooms, etc. The police department needed about 3K square feet, about half of that for a garage, armory, etc. Council chambers was roughly 1,300 square feet. The current Town Hall had 5,900 square feet on two floors.

There was discussion about the Meatland property as follows: i) Mayor Charney stated that if the Town moved forward with the Meatland purchase, it was on 14 lots. The Town could sell any lots that were not needed; ii) Councilwoman Ashworth stated that if the sale was owner-financed, the Town could not subdivide or sell the lots until the loan was paid in full. Bob Panek stated that was true, but there was sufficient capital for the Town to buy and pay it off, adding that each lot had its own deed; iii) Councilman Grossman added that the owners wanted the ongoing income. John Hozey agreed, adding that it was a group of owners who were looking for a long-term revenue stream. After 10 years, the Town could buy it outright; iv) Councilwoman Ashworth asked how the Town would pay for construction. John Hozey responded that the Town has sufficient reserves for that. Councilwoman Ashworth noted that the cost increased based on location for land acquisition and preparation costs, but from a construction standpoint, the land work would be less for the Meatland property; v) Vice Mayor Buchholz commented that the plans were designed for Cassatt Parkway and he did not think that the Town would be required to have the stormwater retention ponds at the Meatland property.

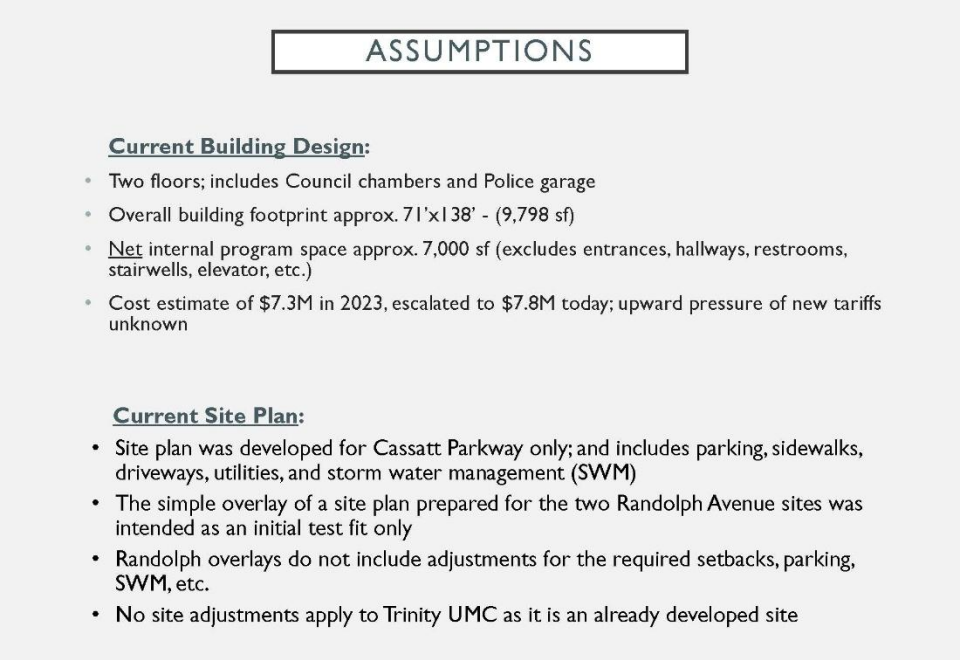
Councilwoman Holloway asked that we start at the beginning of the presentation and look at each option.

Rick Keuroglian agreed and added that we would go through each option and discuss the pros and cons of each and look at the criteria.

Slide 1 – Site Alternatives

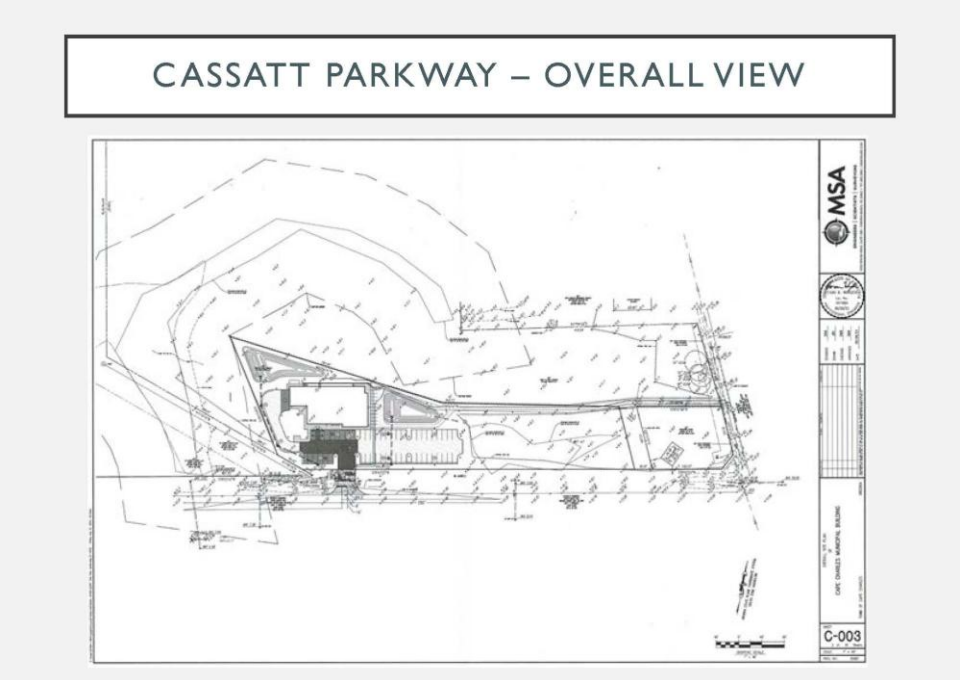


Slide 2 – Assumptions



There was discussion as follows: i) Councilwoman Ashworth asked when the Town acquired the Cassatt Parkway lot. Bob Panek responded that that Town had owned the property for many years. It was originally part of the Sustainable Technology Industrial Park (STIP) which was leased to the Industrial Development Authority. Waco Chemical was the only building that was built. When STIP became defunct, the Town got the property back. This parcel was the remainder of the parcel that was subdivided, and the wetlands area was given to the Rosenwald School; ii) Councilwoman Ashworth expressed her interest in having the parcel appraised adding that it was important to know its value; iii) Rick Keuroglian stated that he had reviewed the current site plan and there would most likely have to have some design adjustments for a new location.

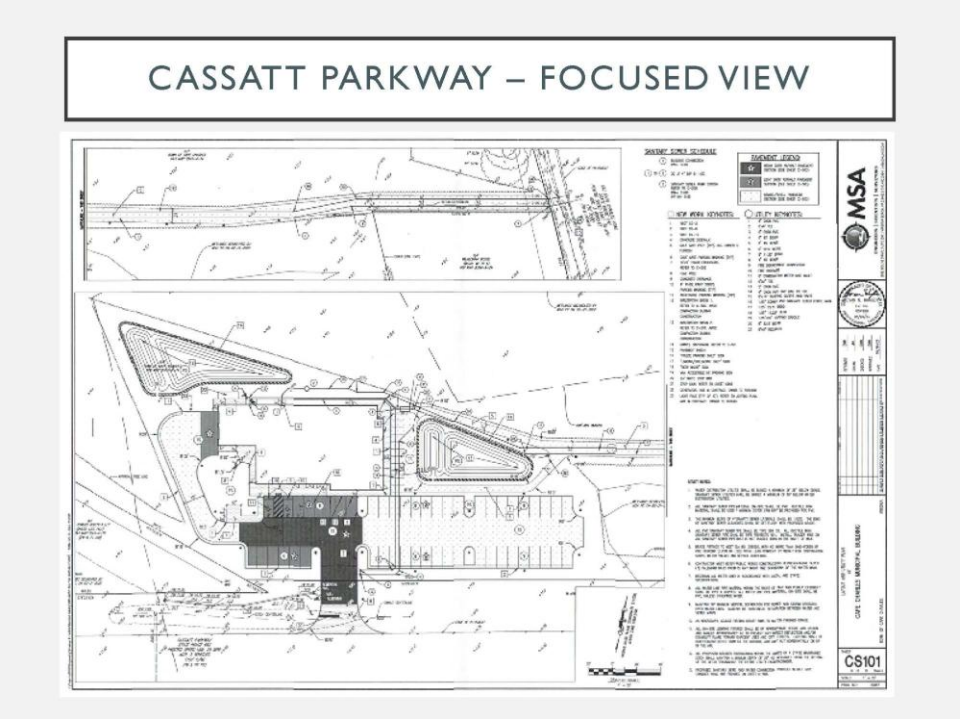
Slide 3 – Cassatt Parkway – Overall View



Bob Panek explained that Cassatt Parkway was on the south side, and Old Cape Charles Road was on the east side. It was a 2.1-acre site that ended at the alley easement into the Rosenwald School property. The

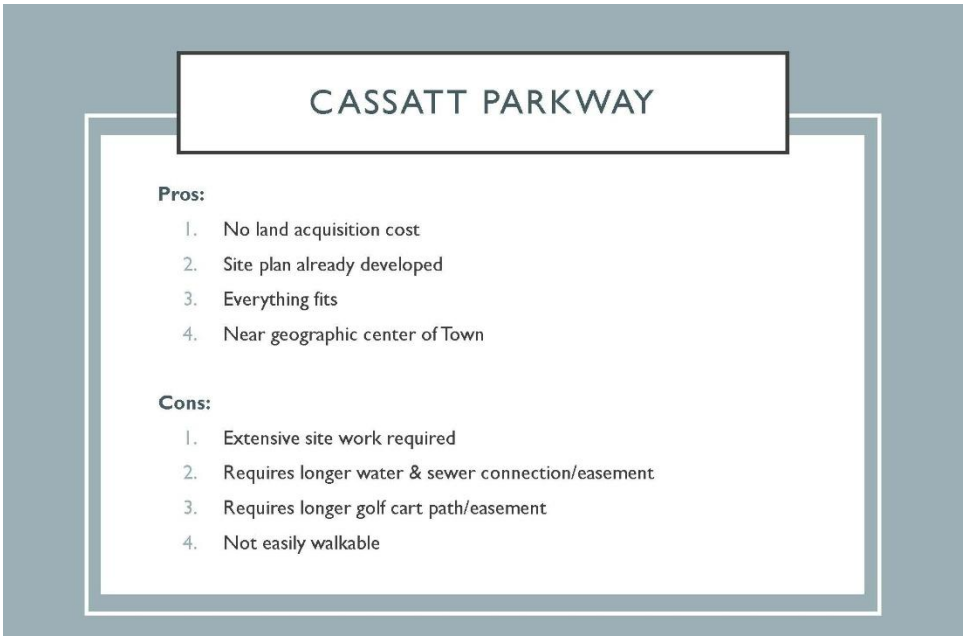
panhandle of the site was encumbered by non-tidal wetlands. To the north was all tidal wetlands. Even though it was a 2.1-acre site, not all of it was usable.

Slide 4 – Cassatt Parkway - Focused View



There were no comments about slide 4.

Slide 5 – Cassatt Parkway

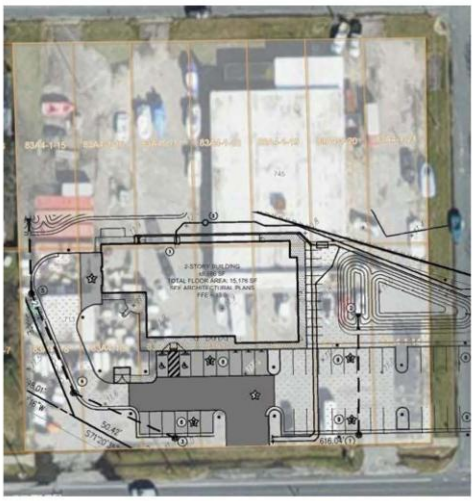


There was discussion as follows: i) This area was considered the geographical center of Town; ii) John Hozey noted that for all locations, the cost would be offset by the sale of the current Town Hall and Civic Center properties. Councilwoman Ashworth asked about the assessment for these properties. John Hozey estimated about $2M total for both properties. Bob Panek added that the Civic Center was on a residential lot. Vacant residential lots were selling for about $250K or more. It would sell for about $500K with the building. Town Hall was a prime commercial parcel and could sell for about $1M to $1.5M.

Rating:

Safety:	1.0	It was safe.
Accessibility:	0.5	There was internal accessibility but not external. Once inside the building, it's accessible. Councilwoman Ashworth stated that this location was the most equitably accessible to all citizens from both the Historic District and Bay Creek.
Capability:	1.0	For staff, Council and Community.
Feel, Character:	0.0	Does not enhance the larger community feel.
Parking:	1.0	Meets the needs for staff, Council, meetings, community. Councilwoman Ashworth noted that it met the needs for people going to Town Hall but not for overflow parking needs for downtown.

Slide 6 – Former Meatland on Randolph Avenue



FORMER MEATLAND ON RANDOLPH AVE

Slide 7 – Former Meatland on Randolph Avenue – Pros and Cons

FORMER MEATLAND ON RANDOLPH AVE

Pros:

1. Removes an eyesore & creates a highly desired upgrade for the entrance corridor into the historic district
2. Walkable location with easy golf cart access
3. Everything fits with extra room for additional parking/landscaping
4. Less costly site development, ($600,000 less)
   - No site clearing, existing parking lot, nearby utilities

Cons:

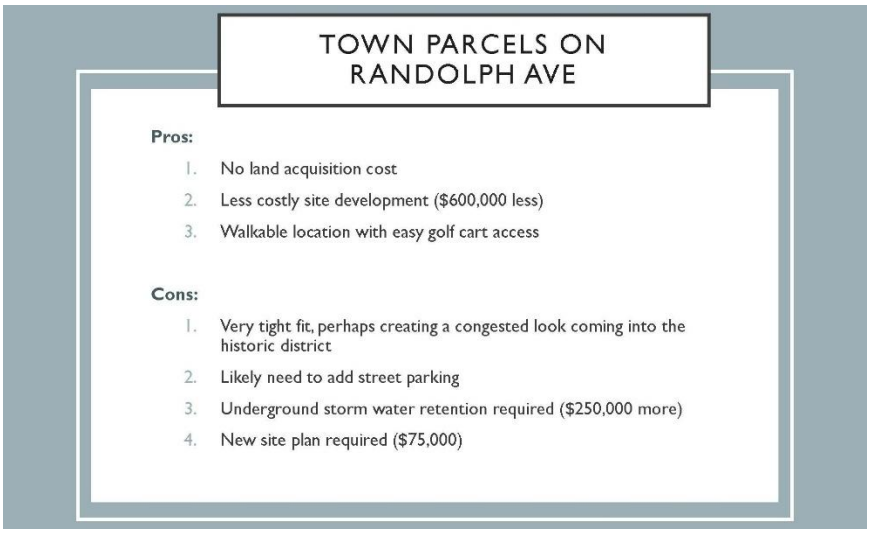
1. Significant acquisition cost, $3,500,000
2. Demolition of existing buildings required ($100,000 more)
3. New site plan required ($60,000 more)
4. Removes commercial property from tax rolls

Discussion: i) Stormwater retention? The property was already paved so requirements should be minimal; ii) Katie Nunez stated that under the state statute, we cannot have water drain onto the street or another property. While Meatland was paved and had an existing building, if we demolished the building and replaced it with a similar sized building, it might be a tradeoff and may not require any further stormwater management; iii) Councilman Grossman stated that the golf cart business would be moving, but the Town purchasing the property would remove it from the tax rolls. At some point, someone might come in and purchase the property for commercial use. Currently, the combination of all 14 lots was valued at $405K and brought in about $600 a year in taxes; iv) Bob Panek stated that the argument was not with the building in its current condition but in the future. Mayor Charney stated that the Town could sell off individual parcels that were not being used. Councilwoman Ashworth noted that it was basically a roll of the dice. We could not predict the future; v) Councilman Butta expressed his concern that the Town would be paying $3.5M for the property. If the price of the new building was too costly and we could not build, we would still have to pay on the property. Councilwoman Ashworth clarified that we would have $2M in the endowment so would actually only be spending $1.5M. John Hozey stated that the terms were 20% down or $700K with the remainder financed over 20 years. The endowment would cover about 30% of the debt service. At the end of the term, we would still have that $2M. 8% of core revenue was set by Council as our debt ceiling which was very low. Most communities are at about 12%; vi) Councilwoman Ashworth commented that if looking at it through an investment lens, we could make money with the endowment and selling some of the lots; vii) Councilwoman Holloway expressed her concern about the uncertainty of ownership. The property was currently owned by a family who were older. We needed to make sure in the arrangement that it was very clear what would happen over 10 years. John Hozey stated that it was addressed in the draft agreement. The Town would take title of it. It was a 20-year term, but the Town could pay it off after 10 years; viii) John Hozey informed the public that Council asked him to contact the Meatland owners to see if the property could be a possibility for the Town Hall. Until recently, we did not know if this would be an option. The negotiations were confidential so it could not be discussed any earlier.

Rating:

Safety:	1.0	It was safe.
Accessibility:	1.0	Yes for all.
Capability:	1.0	For staff, Council and Community.
Feel, Character:	1.0	Might have to tweak the plans for the exterior design. It's in the historic district.
Parking:	1.0	Meets all needs.

Slides 8 & 9 – Town Parcels on Randolph Avenue

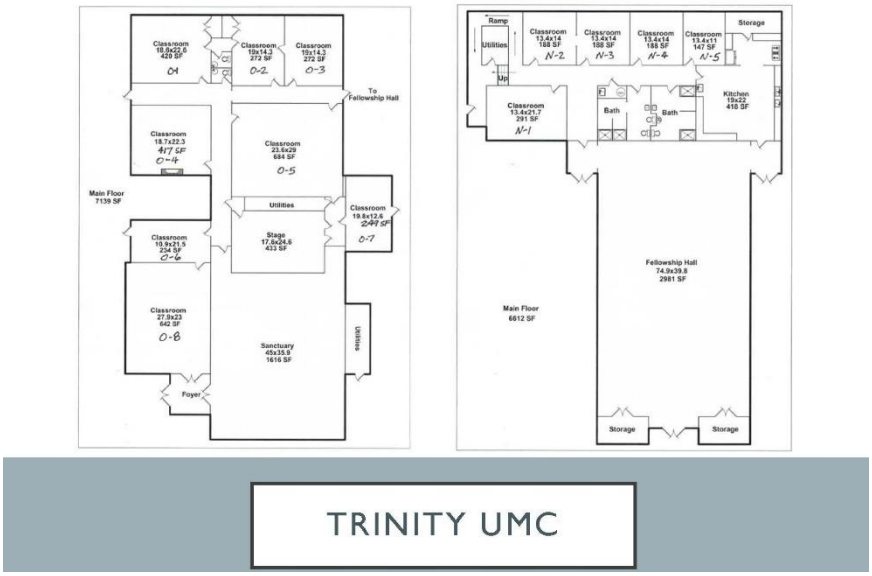


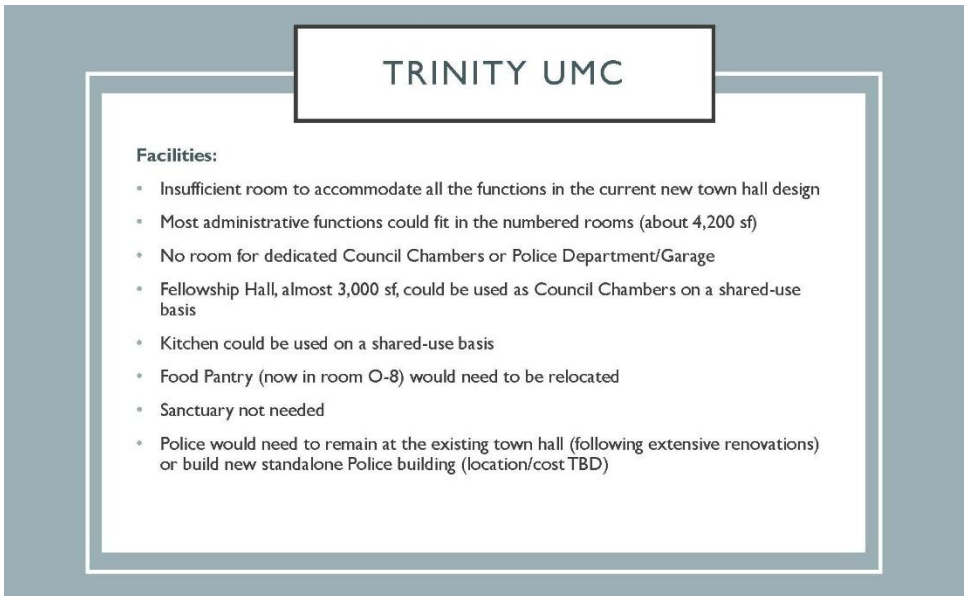
Discussion: i) Possibly a three-story building since it appears that it would be tight. Height restriction for this area was 35' and there would be significant redesign costs. The existing building would fit; ii) Much discussion regarding the lots currently being used by New Roots Youth Garden, which was on 5 lots estimated at a $1.5M value. The lots could be used for parking for the municipal building; iii) There was a suggestion to move the New Roots Youth Garden (NRYG) to the Meatland property if the Town were to purchase it for the new building. The NRYG was an asset to the Town and could potentially be expanded if it was relocated. It could possibly offer garden plots to citizens. Councilwoman Holloway stated that NRYG was a cornerstone of Town and added to the uniqueness of Cape Charles, and moving it was the worst idea she had ever heard; iv) We had to make it an attractive building since it was the entrance into Town; v) It was more affordable to build the municipal center on these 7 lots than to purchase property.

Rating:

Safety:	1.0	It was safe.
Accessibility:	1.0	Yes for all.
Capability:	1.0	For staff, Council and Community.
Feel, Character:	1.0	It's in the historic district.
Parking:	1.0	Meets all needs. Could park on top of the underground stormwater retention and could provide overflow parking.

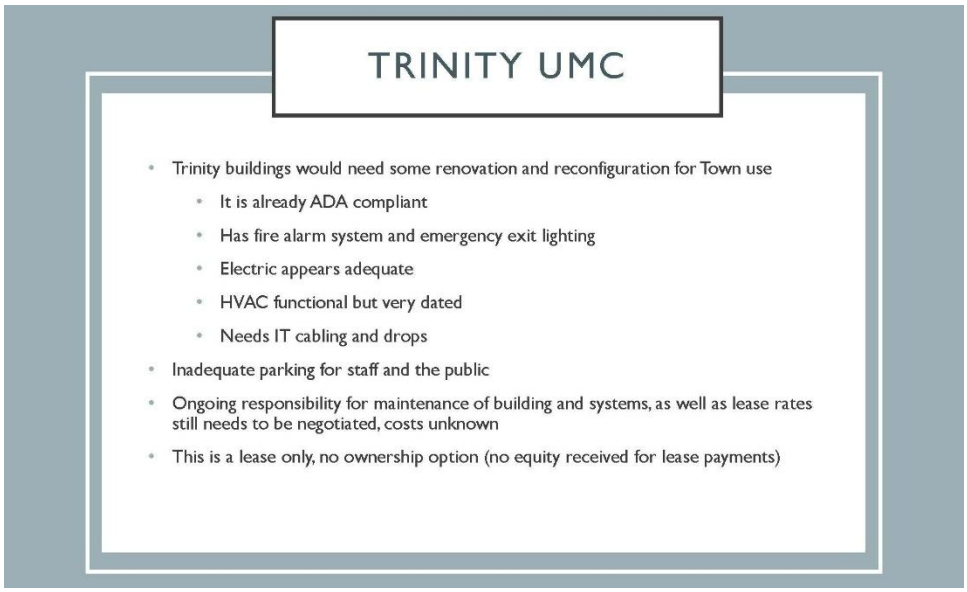
Slides 10 & 11 – Trinity United Methodist Church





Discussion: i) This would be a temporary, short-term option to use while renovating the Town Hall. Not for purchase, lease only. Would allow us to immediately move the administrative staff; ii) It would be a challenge for Council meetings in the Fellowship Hall since this would be a shared space.

Slide 12 – Trinity UMC



Discussion: i) Parking would be on the street along Plum; ii) Would work as a temporary location; iii) Could use the Fellowship Hall for Council Chambers and other meetings if we sold the Civic Center; iv) We could still do an endowment to cover the lease payments; v) Still need location for the police department, possibly put in a small building on Bayshore Road behind the wastewater plant; vi) Councilman Grossman was in favor of renovating the current Town Hall and moving the police department into a pre-fabricated building; vii) Councilwoman Ashworth asked if refurbishing the current Town Hall, relocating the administrative staff to Trinity and moving the police department to another location would be cost effective; viii) Mayor Charney added that an elevator would have to be installed and once you got into the walls of an old building, you did not know the kinds of things that could be found. The Town would spend as much money, if not more, than if we built a new building. Also, how much time and money would be wasted if we renovated the Town Hall and found out if did not have enough space. Bob Panek stated that if we excluded the police department, there would be enough space. Rick Keuroglian stated that space was a challenge. There was no room for our document storage and the police would require another solution. It did not solve our problems. When this was discussed several years ago, Council immediately decided not to refurbish Town Hall. Councilman Grossman noted that he was the only one who wanted to renovate the Town Hall since all other costs were

similar; ix) Vice Mayor Buchholz stated that this could be the case with the Meatland property as well since we did not know what was underground. Cost estimates always went up; x) Councilwoman Holloway stated that utilizing Trinity was a temporary option while we did anything else; xi) John Hozey stated that there was $7.8M in reserve for construction.

Rating for Renovating Town Hall with temporary relocation to Trinity UMC:

Safety:	1.0	It was safe.
Accessibility:	1.0	Yes, it was the whole purpose for doing this.
Capability:	0.5	It would not fit the archives nor the police department.
Feel, Character:	1.0	It's in the historic district.
Parking:	0.5	Not sufficient parking.

Slide 13 – Final Analysis

Option 1 (Cassatt Parkway)

- Cost: $7.8 million
- Benefit: New Town Hall

Option 2 (Meatland Site)

- Cost: $10.86 million*
- Benefit: New Town Hall, plus a major upgrade to our Entrance Corridor

* Endowment could be used to offset annual debt service payments which would also retain the bulk of the purchase funds for future use

Option 3 (Town Lots on Randolph)

- Cost: $7.53 million
- Benefit: New Town Hall, but with some degradation of our Entrance Corridor

Option 4 (Trinity UMC)

- Costs (estimated):
  - Lease payments (25 years): $1.7 million
  - Initial reconfiguration/move in expenses: $0.1 million
  - Existing Town Hall renovation: $2.9 million
  - Total estimated cost: $4.7 million
- Benefit: Safe place for town staff and residents to conduct business, plus a renovated building at 2 Plum (Police Station); but with ongoing lease payments without equity

John Hozey explained that the $2M endowment would be through the Virginia Investment Pool and would earn an estimated 4% return. The Town had been earning about 5-6% over the past several years.

Mayor Charney – Welcome and Ground Rules for Public Participation

Mayor Charney addressed the public stating that there were actually 5 options on the table and nothing had been decided. Any rumors out there were untrue. There would be no time limit for speakers, and we would have open discussions. He asked that only one person speak at a time, and if your question had already been asked, please refrain from asking it again. We wanted to hear opinions from the public.

<u>Public Questions & Answers / Open Discussion</u>

Mark Usry, resident
Mr. Usry stated that there were lots of options and there had been lots of discussion. He suggested Meatland as his preference and asked Council to leave the NRYG alone. The Town had the assets to purchase the Meatland property by selling the seven lots on Randolph Avenue, the parcel on Cassatt Parkway, the Town Hall and Civic Center. We did not need a crystal ball. Purchasing the Meatland property would give us the opportunity to dress up the entrance to Town.

Jim Granger, resident
Mr. Granger stated that he was a lay leader and trustee at Trinity UMC. He was also on the NRYG board and facility chair. He addressed the Council regarding the Town Hall location and budget priorities. (Please see attached.)

Elise McMath, resident
Ms. McMath stated that she liked listening to everyone's comments and opinions. Her ranking of the options was 1) Remodel the existing Town Hall; 2) The Fig/Randolph lots; 3) Cassatt Parkway; 4) Meatland. There was a lot of risk involved with the Meatland property. After attending the budget meetings and listening to John Hozey's warning of possible tax increases in the future, she preferred the most conservative and safe

option. She was interested in the seven lots on the corner of Fig and Randolph. It reminded her of the pictures of the old newspaper building on Randolph and Strawberry. There was so much potential for an empty corner lot. Possibly a three-story building. There could be something really cool there. The Town already owned the land, and it the parking lot could be used as overflow parking. It was an interesting idea. A pro for the Cassatt Parkway parcel was that it was next to the Rosenwald School, and the area could be a hub for the community. Councilwoman Ashworth had noted earlier that it was the center of town. In this central area, a municipal center could be interesting, but she did not know how that area would be developed. She did not like the Meatland option. She hoped that a grocery store would eventually go there, which would make Cape Charles a truly walkable town. If she had to choose, her preference would be the Randolph Avenue lots.

There was some discussion as follows: i) Councilwoman Holloway stated that Cape Charles Main Street (CCMS) had worked over a long period to try to get the owners to transform the property. This latest negotiation was the furthest anyone had come. Feasibility studies were done and CCMS was just trying to help the owners; ii) Vice Mayor Buchholz brought up Lee Goldman who tried to get a lease to bring the Mid Atlantic Maritime Academy here, but the deal fell through; iii) John Hozey stated that it was a group of owners spread out across the country. Trying to get them all to agree to the terms was monumental. It took him a full year. If this deal did not go forward, nothing would happen at the location for a number of years, at least until the current owners passed on; iv) Vice Mayor Buchholz stated that the building was in rough shape and should be condemned. The Town needed to enforce our laws to clean it up, starting with no overnight parking; v) Councilwoman Ashworth asked how old a building had to be before it was considered a historic structure. Katie Nunez responded that the latest cutoff was 1964 for a building to be considered a contributing structure, but she doubted that this building would qualify as a true structure of significance.

Sam Jones, resident
Mr. Jones thanked the Council for holding this session to provide the information to the residents and obtaining our input. This was a big deal and really important. He appreciated the conversations regarding the Town's assets. To construct a new building on the Meatland property would cost an estimated $7.36M since the land had to be purchased, plus that additional $2M for an endowment to cover 30% of the debt service for a total close to $10M. To accomplish this, $10M out of the cash reserves would be used and it would take about 30 months for construction. It was a lot of cash moving out of the system in a short period of time. He cautioned Council of that. He would not want Council to have to increase taxes because other revenue sources did not come in as expected. He would prefer trying to renovate the existing Town Hall and was okay with the police department having to move to another location.

Discussion: i) Vice Mayor Buchholz stated that the Town looked into a bond to spread out the debt service. Sam Jones agreed that municipal bonds were a good option; ii) John Hozey explained that there was $3.5M of unappropriated cash in the General Fund Balance. There was already a $7.M placeholder and adding this $3.5M would take the remnants of the Utility Fund. The Town would still have $5M remaining after doing everything discussed tonight

Ed Wells, resident
Mr. Wells thanked Council for this opportunity to participate in the discussion. He asked the square footage needs of the police department.

Bob Panek responded that the department needed 1,500 square feet for office and associated space and another 1,500 square feet for the garage. The area was experiencing very high costs and bids so we might have to use a prefabricated building or a steel building like the YMCA.

Councilwoman Ashworth noted that if leasing the Trinity building and constructing a new building for the police department, so the Town Hall could be renovated, the cost would be over $7M.

Mr. Wells agreed, adding that there would still be no parking. Also, you did not know what you would find when renovating an old building. He did not think this was the way to go. If the Town was going to do something, it needed to construct a new building.

Councilman Butta asked his location preference.

Mr. Wells responded that the seven Randolph lots might be a tight fit, but he did not see the Cassatt Parkway parcel as an option. He was in favor of either the Randolph Avenue lots or the Meatland property.

Town Clerk Libby Hume read emails from Dora Sullivan and Julie Jones. (Please see attached.)

Next Steps

Mayor Charney stated that the current Town Hall would not work for much longer and something needed to be done.

Discussion: i) Councilwoman Ashworth asked for appraisals on the Town-owned properties as that information needed to be factored into the decisions. We needed to think about selling the unused properties; ii) There was discussion on the cost of an appraiser. Bob Panek stated that it would not be cheap based on the cost for the recent appraisal done on the Canonie property. John Hozey added that it would also take some time; iii) Bob Panek stated that he understood the desire to find out what the properties were worth. The Town would be selling the properties at some point. The real issue was whether Council wanted to spend $3.5M to buy the Meatland property or not. We did not need an appraisal to make that decision. The money could be used to do other things; iv) Councilwoman Holloway stated that we did have estimates for what the properties might sell for. She also found the breakdown of space needs very helpful when talking about the next steps; v) Mayor Charney asked if there would be room for growth when renovating the current Town Hall. Bob Panek stated that there were about 5,800 square feet available and current staff needed about 4,200 square feet without the police department; vi) Councilwoman Ashworth was not comfortable with moving the police department. There was a value to having the police department as part of the administrative community and it was important for them to feel like they were part of the team. John Hozey added that a lot of residents came into the office to see the police department; vii) Councilman Butta wanted an estimate of the cost of moving the police department, cost of the building site, etc.; viii) Mayor Charney stated that if we were going to do this, to not have all services under one roof seemed dysfunctional. He asked for a consensus of which option to pursue.

Ann Pershing, resident
Ms. Pershing stated that this was so fascinating, adding that she liked hearing the different thoughts. If the intent was to hear from the entire community, how was the Council going to get the thoughts of those that were not in attendance, since there were only about 20 residents here this evening? Would Council now go out and talk to their constituents to find out the best thing from everyone else? She loved this Town and its walkability. The decision needed to be made to build for the whole town.

Rick Keuroglian stated that he wanted this whole process to be transparent. He valued the public's feedback. Staff was frustrated working under the current conditions. They felt that a new Town Hall would never happen, and it hurt him to hear that. It was important for their morale. The current Town Hall was a facility that would never meet the standard. Everyone had needs. He asked Council and the public to please consider the staff.

Councilman Newman stated that he used to shop at Meatland, but it was currently an eyesore. It was really difficult for him to spend that kind of money when we had other options. The Town Hall and Civic Center were not attractive properties to sell and would not be easy. At some point we would have the opportunity to consider the railroad property. If we purchased the Meatland property for $3.5M we were handicapping our ability to purchase the railroad property, which would be a tremendous opportunity. One of the things he never liked about the Meatland transaction was the fact that the Town did not need the entire property, but the owners were unwilling to sell a portion of it. He personally did not want the Town Hall on that property.

Rick Keuroglian recapped the ratings:
- Cassatt Parkway = 3.5
- Meatland = 5.0
- Randolph Lots = 5.0
- Rehab of Town Hall with Trinity lease = 4.0

Mayor Charney stated that a consensus was needed to narrow down the options. Staff needed a place to work without worrying about things on a daily basis.

Rick Keuroglian asked Council to think about safety. The Town Hall had structural problems and black mold in the building. It did not meet egress standards with only one way in and out. If we had an active shooter, staff had bear spray for defense. This was a serious issue. Staff's safety was the biggest thing for him.

Marion Sofield commented that having 15 people share one bathroom was outrageous.

Councilwoman Ashworth stated that the current Town Hall no longer had adequate space and did not demonstrate respect for the staff, adding that option 4 needed to be taken off the table. She did not like to split up the staff. When getting into the walls of the building, other issues could be discovered. This could end up costing as much as the other options. She wanted the Town Hall to last for several generations. Her preference was either the Randolph lots or Meatland.

Councilman Grossman still preferred renovation of the current Town Hall and leasing temporary offices from Trinity. He would like to hear the cost to have the police department in their own building. As a second option, he liked the Randolph Avenue lots. He was against the Cassatt Parkway parcel or purchasing Meatland.

Councilman Butta's first choice was the Randolph lots. He did not like the Cassatt Parkway parcel and did not think renovating the Town Hall would work especially with the cost of a new police department building and not having the team together. He preferred a new building for everything. His second choice would be the Meatland property.

Vice Mayor Buchholz agreed with Councilman Grossman.

Councilwoman Holloway stated that the renovation of the current Town Hall should be removed from consideration. A good first step would be to move staff into Trinity UMC rather than waiting. Her current preference was the Randolph lots, adding that it would be better if we could purchase the two lots that Custom Carts was currently leasing to add to the municipal center property since it would provide more room for what was needed. Cassatt Parkway was off the table and the Meatland property would eventually sell.

Councilman Newman stated his preference with the Randolph lots adding that he liked the immediacy of moving staff to Trinity UMC now. He did have some reservations about the impact on the neighborhood with the town offices in the residential neighborhood. The Town office was a business with employees and members of the public coming in and out constantly. There would be parking issues which also concerned him.

Bob Panek commented that he lived next door to Trinity UMC, and it did not bother him.

Mayor Charney stated that it sounded like the consensus was for the Randolph Avenue lots. He agreed with this but still preferred the Meatland property since the Town could sell off some of the unneeded lots. In his opinion, the Cassatt Parkway parcel and renovation of the Town Hall were off the table.

Rick Keuroglian asked for a show of hands to remove the Cassatt Parkway parcel as an option. There was a unanimous show of hands in favor.

Rick Keuroglian asked for a show of hands to remove the renovation of the current Town Hall. There was a majority in favor with Councilman Grossman opposed.

Rick Keuroglian asked for a show of hands for those in favor of relocating the Town Hall to the seven lots on Randolph Avenue. There was a majority in favor with Councilman Grossman opposed.

Rick Keuroglian asked for a show of hands in favor of relocating to the Meatland property. Only Mayor Charney was in favor.

Councilman Butta asked Rick Keuroglian to contact the owners of Meatland about purchasing the two lots currently being leased by Custom Carts. John Hozey stated that he had been holding the owners at bay for a

long time and they knew Council was meeting this evening to discuss it, adding that they would not be happy and the option would go away.

John Hozey continued to state that he would notify the owners and their attorneys, reiterating that he had been working on this at Council's direction.

Bob Panek stated that he had a contract change order to update the building plans and just needed to let them know which location. It should not take long to update. He would now enter negotiations with Trinity UMC for the lease.

John Hozey stated that the FY 2026 draft budget included the purchase of Meatland. The budget was on the June 18, 2025 Council agenda for adoption. He had prepared a series of budget amendments to remove the purchase which would free up some additional money. Two other items on the agenda were the amendment to the Community Strategic Plan to update the Priorities, and the Capital Asset Management Program to correct the current procedure. Both would be presented for readoption.

Motion made by Vice Mayor Buchholz, seconded by Councilwoman Holloway, to adjourn the Town Council Town Hall Meeting. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:09 p.m.

_____
Mayor Charney

_____
Town Clerk

May 27, 2025 Town Hall Meeting re: Municipal Building Options

Jim Granger, resident
All,

We are in a difficult economic period for our town. We put almost all of our eggs into the tourist basket, and that basket is running low. I'm sure there's hard data to back me up in Cape Charles, but Northampton County is already planning a tax increase to make up for the shortfall in Transient Occupancy Tax revenues. Anecdotally, STR rentals are down. Many STRs have been forced into 3- and 4-day bookings, and that is causing problems for the B&Bs. There are lots of houses for sale, and many are just sitting, even after "price improvements" (love that phrase!!). Taxes are already hurting the people of Cape Charles - we really need to cut back on spending and give them a break!! I know that we have kicked the can on things for too long, but if we're spending, spend wisely, and if we don't need to take on an expensive project right now, don't.

Town Hall - I agree that we have to do something. I STRONGLY disagree with buying the former Meatland property. It's too expensive, takes a valuable commercial property off the tax rolls, and I think it's the wrong location. I've heard that some people have said that we need to clean up the entrance to town - why?? Are people not coming to Cape Charles because they think the Meatland property is an eyesore?? I wish it would deter people on a summer weekend, when you can't move on Bay Avenue and downtown!!

While I am the lay leader and a trustee of Trinity United Methodist Church, I'm also a full-time voting citizen of Cape Charles. As I stated earlier, let's look for cheaper options, even if it isn't ideal. While I don't feel leasing part of Trinity would be a permanent solution for Town Hall, it would buy time and allow for renovation of the existing town hall and/or building a new town hall in a location other than Meatland.

As an aside, the members of Trinity do not own the church - it is held "in common" by the Virginia Annual Conference of the UMC. If Trinity were to close, the building would revert back to the Conference who would decide what to do with it. The desire of the Conference is to revitalize the congregation in Cape Charles, not close it.

Budget Priorities - In my opinion, we desperately need sidewalks, which would benefit residents and tourists alike. We should be able to walk the length of Fig Street on a sidewalk, and from Fig Street along every East-West avenue to the beach. We only need to do one side of the street. I understand the dilemma of the ordinance which requires all homeowners to provide a sidewalk in front of their house. My recommendation is that all new construction provide a sidewalk, and the town take care of the rest. If there are issues with residents who were forced to pay for a sidewalk even if they weren't new construction, my suggestion is to pay them back - at the amount they paid for the sidewalk, not at current rates.

We can't buy Meatland, build an expensive town hall, execute a $25M beach plan, and potentially buy a Welcome Center, without massive tax increases. We are Cape Charles, not Virginia Beach, Hilton Head, OBX, or Ocean City. Who are we building all this stuff for? Not the full-time residents who have to pay for it!

Welcome Center - I have heard that there is discussion about buying a property on Peach Street for use as a Welcome Center. I am VEHEMENTLY opposed to that idea. We already have a welcome center, on the outskirts of town where it should be, that even has a name - the Cape Charles Museum and Welcome Center. I have heard that there might be some hard feelings between members of Town Council, Cape Charles Main Street, and the Museum and that has led to the concept of a Welcome Center on Peach Street. If that's the case, I say "get over it, work the problems out without making residents pay for it".

Sincerely,
Jim Granger

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Dora Sullivan, resident
Subject: New Town Hall

Good evening, Town Manager, Mayor and Council Members.

What makes living in a small town so special and unique is that we are a walking town. We can walk to everything that we need, the doctor, pharmacy, post office, library and hopefully we can include walking to the old Meat Land to pay bills or take care of town business.

Dora Sullivan

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Julie Jones, resident
Good afternoon, Mayor Charney, Council members, and Town Manager Keuroglian:

Thank you for sharing the information about the four options for the town offices.

My name is Julie Jones, and my husband and I live at 538 Monroe Avenue.

I believe that there might be a fifth option, which might be cheaper. What if the current town offices were moved into Trinity UMC and the current civic building, while the current town office building is renovated?

The current civic building would not be needed for council meetings, since Trinity has a large fellowship hall which could be used for meetings, plus the fellowship hall would provide seating for more than the current 99 people allowed by the fire code in the civic building.

The current town offices could then be renovated, without having to build a new building to house those functions.

If more space is still needed, then a new, smaller building could be built on the town-owned property out by the Washington-Rosenwald school, to house offices that citizens do not routinely need to visit, and perhaps a new police station and/or fire station could be located there as well, freeing up those spaces currently occupied in town.

This plan would not require the town to purchase any additional property, and would preserve the "Meatland" site for a commercial business (perhaps a grocery store?) to come in, so a valuable commercial property which generates tax revenue would not be taken off the tax rolls.

Basing nearly all of the town's economy on tourism, we are seeing what happens when tourism slacks off.

There has been talk of raising taxes next year, something no one wants, in order to cover all the needs of the town.

Surely this is not the time to undertake a $10 million project, when an option to recycle/repurpose what the town already owns might be a viable option, worth looking into.

Thanks for your service to the town of Cape Charles…this is a tough job!"

Julie Jones