



TOWN COUNCIL
Public Input Session
Cape Charles Civic Center
March 13, 2021
2:00 PM

At 2:00 p.m. Mayor William “Smitty” Dize, having established a quorum, called to order the Town Council Public Input Session regarding the Draft Community Strategic Plan. In addition to Mayor Dize, in attendance were Councilmen Buchholz, Follmer and Grossman, and Councilwoman Holloway. Vice Mayor Bennett arrived at 2:01 p.m. There is currently one vacancy on the Council. Also, in attendance were Town Manager John Hozey, Community Relations Manager Jennifer Lewis and Town Clerk Libby Hume. There was one member of the public physically in attendance, and 21 viewers on Facebook.

PUBLIC INPUT:

Phil Goetkin.

Please see attached for Mr. Goetkin’s input.

Town Clerk Libby Hume read comments submitted in writing from Bill Prickett, Susan Burger, Libby Gray, Lisa Guzzardo, Frank and Andrea Giardina, Dianne Davis, and Jim Granger. (Please see attached.)

There were no other comments received in writing prior to the meeting nor during the public comment period.

Motion made by Councilwoman Holloway, seconded by Councilman Follmer, to adjourn the Town Council Public Input Session. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

The meeting adjourned at 2:21 p.m.

Mayor Dize

Town Clerk

Comments Provided in Writing March 13, 2021 Town Council Public Input Session

Phil Goetkin

Our Strategic Planning Document includes a wonderful vision statement:

Our Vision:

Preserve our historical, natural, and cultural resources, while fostering a sense of community that enhances well-being and prosperity, now and for generations to come

Two of the specific goals included in this document together with their objectives are essential to achieving this vision:

- **To plan for coastal resiliency**
 - Metric: develop an implementable plan
 - a. Develop an implementable plan, to include the Resilience Adaptation Feasibility Tool (RAFT) recommendations
- **To protect and improve public green/open space infrastructure**
 - Metric: develop an implementable plan
 - a. Review existing/previous plans and develop an implementable plan

I believe that both of these goals need to be given higher priority in this Strategic Plan.

Time is of the essence for being able to accomplish these two goals and their associated objectives. Unfortunately, neither of these objectives are included in the 2021/2022 work plans identified in this Strategic Plan. I realize that the Town has a funding shortfall, but we need to take immediate actions to accomplish these objectives. If we procrastinate on these issues, we will run out of time. We can't wait 2,3,5 or 10 years to start working on them.

Scientists overwhelmingly acknowledge the concept of Climate Change and Global Warming. Cape Charles will continue to become more and more impacted.

The University of Virginia's study published in December of 2018, "Strategies for Conserving the Green Infrastructure of Cape Charles, VA" offers many wonderful ideas that need to be reviewed and implemented.

Commercial, residential and industrial development and re-development has been significant in Cape Charles over the last several years. Unfortunately, this progress has resulted in the net loss of many of our trees. Immediately, we need to start the strict enforcement of our Tree Conservation and Preservation Ordinance as included in the Cape Charles Zoning Ordinance. We also need to comply with the tenants of the town's Master Tree Plan.

Finally, the Town needs to develop and implement a tree planting plan. Many opportunities exist to plant trees in our public right of ways especially on Mason Avenue in the space abutting the Tavi Property.

Bill Prickett

Subject: Community Strategic Plan

Thank you for the work that you put in on this initiative. It's good to have a plan.

Since this initial plan is quite broad and does not address the specific implementation and costs of the stated goals and objectives, there is little to disagree with.

I would like to address the plan's statement regarding budget shortfall and offer two words (and they are not "Raise Taxes"):

PAID PARKING

Here are some eye popping numbers:

Dewey Beach DE Population 341, Annual Parking Revenue \$1+ Million Bethany Beach DE Population 854, Annual Parking Revenue \$2+ Million Rehoboth Beach DE Population 1,400, Annual Parking Revenue \$6+ Million Lewes DE Population 2,747, Annual /Parking Revenue \$500+ Thousand

Parking revenue information is from the published budgets of the respective towns and is gross revenue before associated expenses.

I urge you to seriously consider what could be a very significant source of revenue to not only close any current budget gap, but also to help fund the future of our town.

Susan Burger

Subject: Strategic Plan

I was pleased to see volunteerism mentioned in the strategic plan. I have a lot of experience with coordinating volunteer programs/services and would be happy to volunteer to work with whoever is appropriate to try to help with organizing a volunteer pool within town for various services. I have found, if a volunteer program is well run, that volunteers can be depended on to get a lot of jobs done, save organizations money, and be valuable resources. I think there is also ways to incorporate a volunteer initiative with internships and apprenticeships for students, both high school and community college (also mentioned in the plan). It's also a way to foster a lot of public/private partnerships. Please, however is necessary, let this be my comment on the strategic plan.

Thank you so much!

Libby Gray

Subject: Strategic Plan Input

I believe it worth pointing out that 2 items listed separately in the draft Strategic Plan,

a) workforce-affordable housing and

b) review of short-term rental regulations are inextricably interlaced, and also speak indirectly to 'Sense of Community' in the Plan.

If our town is so business-friendly that short-term rental properties are permitted unlimited increase in number, what motive is there for any current property owner to focus on workforce housing? The fact that the vacation rental market (compared to residence market) is so lucrative is undeniably linked to workforce housing shortage.

How does one get homeowners to commit to longer-term rentals?

Perhaps an increased fee on short-term rentals could be used to generate a subsidy (to offset income loss) for homeowners who agree to only rent on a longer-term basis, (perhaps 3 or 6 month rental contracts)?

Or, alternately, a cap on the number of weekly rental properties registered each season would free up housing supply. A cap in rental properties would also allow those owners who DID get permits to charge higher rates, through basic supply-and-demand outcomes, creating both higher profits for owners and tax revenues for the town.

Either of these ideas could be revenue-neutral to the town if executed carefully, and there are probably more clever solutions out there than these.

I do not have a rental property, but it seems obvious that if those who DO can make 3- or 4- or 5- times as much money with weekly AirBnBs (compared to renting to young families/workforce) you're just not going to make housing affordable for renters here, so the two issue cannot be divorced from each other in discussions.

Thank you for your solicitation of community input, and your work on this Draft Strategic Plan.

Lisa Guzzardo

Subject: Community Strategic Plan Feedback

Hello, Thanks very much to the team of people who put this plan together...and thank you for requesting our input. My husband, Earl (Chip) Moore and I live at 156 Sunset Blvd in Cape Charles. We are full time residents (since 2017) and have owned multiple properties for 10 years.

Comments are below:

Community Values:

- Friendliness - excellent first value, will be great to encourage friendliness (and many of the other values) across political differences, "come-heres" vs "been-heres," full-time vs part-time residents, Bay Creek vs town residents, and all other differences.
- Are plans underway to post and publicize these Values, along with the town Vision? The more we all see them, the more likely people will live them and hopefully hold ourselves and others accountable.

Goals:

- Well written. All very important to the town. Happy to see that an overtly stated goal to become a tourist mecca has NOT been included. The stated goals may encourage tourism, but not for tourism's sake alone.

Objectives:

- Glad to see "Encourage Citizen Engagement" (p.5)
- Maintain/Improve walkability (p.6): Sidewalks will be excellent to have consistently throughout the community; however, the "enforcement" of installing sidewalks is not fair or equitable. Someone buys an empty lot and is required to pay for the installation of sidewalks in order to receive their Occupancy permit. Someone buys an existing home but is NOT required to put in sidewalks. This is not fair. All transfers of property ownership should require sidewalks to be installed where they do not exist.
- Safe Golf Cart Culture (p.6): Enhancing golf cart "infrastructure" should not be at the expense of non-golf cart owners. Everyone is not interested in this culture. Registration fees, taxes, fines, or other revenue generating ideas should be created to fund these changes. Is there a personal property tax on golf carts -- as there is on cars and boats?? Better enforcement of "rules" is critical. As of now nothing is enforced (at least as it appears). We see people drinking alcohol in their carts. We see clearly underage children driving carts - either alone or on the laps of their parents. Traffic rules are barely obeyed. We've seen drunken(?) or what seem to be impaired teens/kids driving carts up and down the "boardwalk" on Bay Avenue. In general they are a danger, a nuisance and an inconvenience to law abiding citizens!!! We, and several of our neighbors, refer to their behavior as "vacation brains"!! :)
- Review and update the ordinances and guidelines of the HDRB (p.6): Not only HDRB, but also zoning and planning related -- Realtors must be required to thoroughly disclose the town's ordinances and guidelines to potential property buyers. As we listen in on the various Board (Zoom) calls, it sounds like the new property owners are being turned down for renovations or expansions that they should have known were unlikely to be approved. Why did they think they could do these things when they purchased the properties? For example, new Kool Eatz owner (C1/R1 properties), previous owners of the Kellogg building who sold since they could not renovate as hoped (rumor or truth??), church at the corner of Strawberry and Madison, various porch renovations, setback requirements from the Chesapeake Bay, etc.... There needs to be better communications between the potential buyers, realtors, and the town so buyers are not sadly disappointed in their purchase.
- Protect and maintain the harbor (p.7): Don't understand what the RFP is requesting. "...determine market forces necessary to promote healthy balance..." Could this be clarified?
As long time boaters up and down the Chesapeake Bay (and beyond!), coming to towns with a great mix of commercial and recreational harbor cultures make the destinations much more interesting. Retaining the watermen and charter boats in the harbor is more enticing and quaint than the sterile, corporate feeling found in some marinas such as Cambridge (Hyatt) and Kings Mill. Please don't push them out!! Keep the traditions alive. Hold CC Yachting Center accountable for running the harbor marina as the town wants it to be run, not as New Englanders think it should work!!!!
- Improve business access to workforce resources AND Advance a variety of housing options for younger families and workforce(p.7): Good objectives!! To enable the town to support the businesses that we love (restaurants, shops, galleries, etc.), there must be a worker-friendly culture. Glad to see these included.

Implementation:

- Annual Citizen survey -- excellent idea!
- Taxes: Very sore subject. Here are some general comments:
 - "The town has not significantly raised taxes in 12 years" - At this time, property values are increasing. That will increase revenue without increasing the tax rates. What other ideas exist for raising revenue - beyond tax percentages? Possibly consider increases on rental income/residences similar to the Floridian model. Full time homesteaders (lower taxes) vs part-time/rental residents. The full-timers are the ones who support the CC businesses year round.

- Fear of water and sewer rate increases due to the potential take over of the water/sewer by an outside firm. These rates are already high. What will be the impact of this potential change?
- Personal property tax (generally shocking)! Is it legal to be taxed by both the town and county? Is revenue being lost by having residents "hide"/register their property in other states/counties: Cars, boats, RVs, etc. (due to the crazy expensive personal prop tax)?
- Do retirees realize the extent of this taxation? Of course, it is up to all of us to research this before moving here, but, those of us coming from other states have never heard of this type of taxation!! We will never buy another high-end, new vehicle while living here. Would more residents purchase boats and patronize the marinas if the PP tax was not so high?
- States like Florida and Delaware are becoming more attractive for retirees. In general, cost of living is increasing -- food, gas, etc. making relocation and retirement a challenge. Many of the people considering a move to CC fall into this category.
- Planning horizon - understand the need for resources (both human and financial), but 6 years sounds very long.

Work plans: Please summarize the items targeted for 2021 and 2022. I could go through and mark anything not listed on the FY23 and beyond list, but it would be helpful to have the 21 and 22 list outlined in the document.

Disappointing to see items like "programs with high schools/ESCC", job fairs and internships delayed until 2023 and beyond. Business owners and other retirees in the town should be able to assist with these.

Well thought-out document overall. Thanks again for the hard work and the request for comments. If anything that has been written above could use some clarification, please let us know.

Very sincerely,
Lisa C. Guzzardo
Earl (Chip) Moore

Frank Giardina

Subject: Cape Charles Strategic Plan comments
Hello

This is Frank & Andrea Giardina at 301 Madison Ave, Cape Charles.

We reviewed the draft of the plan, and feel it touches on many important issues. We would just like to add a few thoughts or ideas to consider as follows:

Cleaner water

Recycling pick up- it seems that many people just throw away recyclables in the regular trash because they don't feel like driving it to the Recycling center.

Beaches- there are pilons on the water that can be hazardous as they go under water when the tide is up. Plus is it reasonable to have daily beach clean up.

Home renovations- it seems the process is complicated and unclear to the average homeowner.

Thank you.

Dianne Davis

COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

In the section entitled Our Community Values, I think you should really pay close attention to that list because it needs to be realized that these values are for the entire town—not just for a particular group of people.

When you say caring, Wonder who we are suppose to be caring about. This town now is mostly centered around retirees that have moved here—which is great, and tourism.

Adaptability is just a word now, what is happening now is that we are planning our town as a special place for retirees who are moving here.

Caring – I read this document several times and I did not see one thing included as recreation for our children. Yes, Cape Charles we do have some children living here year round. We have a very nice park that can always be used if you want to play soccer or tennis. We have the kids playground for children up to 12 years old, but what about the other children?

Why it is that after all these years we have not been concerned enough about our children to put something in the park for them? We could at least have it so that they can play volleyball and basketball any time. It is a shame that we have all this great publicity about our town and activities for our children are left completely out.

In the summer we have music in the park that is well attended by adults. This is usually a great time for the adult to have fun, but the park should be more than that.

I was really excited when the talk first started about the park because I just knew that it would be a place for our children to play and have fun. Once the park was completed, it seemed to have become a place for adults to come and have fun. This park is such a nice place—we need to have something there so that it can be used by more of our children. The places where I have seen parks were always children friendly-- please make our park friendly for all people. When I say all people, I am talking about the children, teenagers, and adults.

As a concerned citizen and concerned about recreation for our children, I do believe in the park. I not only donated to the park, but I spent time working there when help was needed. Again, please do not forget recreation for our children in your future plans.

Town Clerk – Have you really look at the responsibilities of your town clerk? She should have the title of Administrative Assistant in addition to Town Clerk and FOIA Officer, plus she should be paid accordingly. It would be very hard to replace Mrs. Libby Hume with all the experiences she has as well as her responsibilities. Please pay attention to your employees that you many times just take for granted. **Mrs. Hume is definitely an asset to you and to our town.**

Dianne Davis

Jim Granger

Subject: Strategic Plan Feedback
Mayor Dize, Members of Town Council,

Overall, I think the Strategic Plan is a very solid plan. It balances the many aspects of the town that make Cape Charles a wonderful place to live, particularly the beach and downtown. That said, I think it overlooks a typically overlooked segment of our population, and some key potential partners.

Cape Charles is one of the most affluent towns on the Eastern Shore, and more money is pouring into town. Unfortunately that is squeezing the less affluent families in town, particularly those in the Seabreeze Apartments and Myrtle Landing. We also have a large number of senior citizens in town. I feel that the Town needs to consider those populations and their needs in the Strategic Plan. We are also fortunate to have nine churches in town, including Trinity UMC which hosts the Food Bank of the Lower Eastern Shore. I think the Town should include churches in its community partnerships, especially since they focus more on the lesser-privileged citizens of the Town.

Sincerely,
Jim Granger