Town Council/Planning Commission

Strategic Planning Retreat – Day 3

Oyster Farm Cabana Room
February 20, 2021
10:00 a.m.

At 10:13 a.m., Vice Mayor Steve Bennett called to order the Town Council Strategic Planning Retreat. In addition to Vice Mayor Bennett, present were Councilmen Grossman, Bannon, Follmer and Buchholz, and Councilwoman Holloway. Mayor Dize arrived at approximately 11:30 a.m. Also, present were Town Manager John Hozey, and Community Relations Manager Jen Lewis.

Planning Commissioner D'Amico called to order the Planning Commission Work Session. In addition to Commissioner D'Amico, present were Commissioners Butta, Strub, Holloway, and Councilman Grossman – Town Council representative to the Planning Commission. Commission Chair Bill Stramm arrived at approximately 11:00 a.m.

The department heads in attendance were: Capital Projects Manager Bob Panek, and Public Works Manager John Lockwood. Treasurer Deborah Pocock arrived at approximately 11:00 a.m.

There was one member of the public in attendance.

Temperature checks were done on each attendee, including members of the public.

John Hozey thanked all who were in attendance for their time on the weekend. He passed out an agenda and other documents that would be needed throughout the day. He noted the first item on the agenda was to review the Northampton County Draft Comprehensive Plan for local input. He was not able to put as much attention into the plan as he would hope, but fortunately, Councilman Grossman had done extensive research and was prepared to lead the discussion. He then turned this portion of the discussion over to Councilman Grossman.

Councilman Grossman started by going over a few ground rules to include keeping comments focused on the discussion and reminding everyone of the ability to submit personal comments on the County website. The topics to be discussed today included Town edge/gateway concept, utilities extension, housing, Cape Charles tourism zone, harbor, education, and the 143 implementation (how many strategies the county has). He asked if there were any additional items to be discussed and Bob Panek added that page 61, item 12 addressed developing additional marine resources in lower Bayside Northampton County. We currently had three at this time that we struggled to fill up.

Councilman Grossman led the discussion on the following: i) Town edge, gateway concept. Bob Panek shared that if the county was not willing to provide sewage or water supply it was a non-starter. ii) Utilities buying into the Town edge. Vice Mayor Bennett stated that if the county wanted to pay then the Town would be happy to have that discussion. iii) Housing. Councilman Grossman stated there was currently no point of contact in the County for housing and they were relying on individual groups. The Town recommendation should be for the County to appoint a contact person. iv) Tourism. Comments to take forward to the county would be for the County to recognize and promote the Town(s). At this time the Town(s) were more of a grey area. Financial support for recreational services needed to be improved. v) Harbor. The language addressing the Cape Charles Town Harbor as a fishing port needed to be addressed. This was where Bob Panek's comments should be addressed about adding additional marinas to lower Northampton County. vi) Education. There was currently no promotion for education. Education required everyone working together to drive apprenticeships and work opportunities. The message to send was that we needed to see the implementation metric and then decide if we had the ability to move forward. vii) Councilwoman Holloway noted that on page 57 the technology zone was addressed but there was no reference to Cape Charles. There was currently no strategy to utilize or take advantage of those resources which could benefit work force housing and other similar issues. Coastal Precast needed to be added as a main job contributor. viii) Commissioner Holloway referenced page 140 as a good place to address county resources for the Rosenwald School Initiative. ix) Vice Mayor Bennett added that the rails to trails were represented in the graphics as ending at the water and this information needed to be corrected to show that it stopped at the hump. x) Commissioner Holloway added that he was color blind and could not read the graphics. Councilman Grossman directed Commissioner Holloway to the comment on the County website as this was vital input for many.

Councilman Grossman thanked everyone for the discussion and turned the meeting back over to Mr. Hozey.

John Hozey again thanked everyone for attending today. He was confident the goals that had been captured at the last session covered what we were trying to accomplish. We would continue to make best guesses, but the future was always unknown. Objectives would get done and over time others would be added. John Hozey asked everyone to review the goals and objectives to make sure nothing was missed from sessions 1 and 2. Councilman Grossman Page 5, 8b and asked whether these were grant recommendations. John Hozey stated 8c should be viability and not liability. Bob Panek commented that on page 4. 7 should be 6, 6 should be 5 and 5 should be 7. There were no further comments.

Councilwoman Holloway voiced a concern about the flow of the vision. Everyone took a few minutes to review. The new mission did not need changes but a better flow. The corrected vision would read, "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."

John Hozey proceeded to ask if Council would like to see the list of goals prioritized. It was decided to keep the goals numbered for reference only at this time and once presented for public review the numbers would be changed to bullet points. There was discussion about the wording of affordable housing. The newest term being used was diversified inventory of housing. The final recommendation was to change Goal 8 to advance a variety of housing options for younger families and work force.

John Hozey moved on to objectives. We were currently doing some of the objectives listed but needed to make sure we continued to capture them. There was discussion regarding how to implement a business portion since there was no longer a Cape Charles Business Association since it was absorbed by Cape Charles Main Street. It was noted that this might take a group approach. 5c was added and read, developing private and public collaboration to guide business development and remove barriers. The milestones were i) specific reviews of ordinances, processes and regulations, ii) Main Street would be a tool kit for starting new business. Objective 7 was changed to Protect and improve public green/open space. 7b was added to review existing plans (UVA) to include the County plan.

John Hozey asked that the Task Organization chart be reviewed individually before starting a group discussion. While reviewing it was important to remember that there were three areas to consider, to include time, money and staffing. Councilman Grossman pointed out that it was better to identify a current organization or title versus a person in the event that person left the tasks remained with the group. The group continued to go through the tasks list and assigned completion dates and staff to each task. A few tasks were removed. While filling out the tasks sheet the group spent a large amount of time discussing budgeting restraints, as well as possible solutions and changes that could be made during budgeting and billing processes. John Hozey circulated several handouts that helped in explaining the Town's past, current and future budget numbers.

John Hozey informed the group that he would take all the information that was received today to work into a manageable document to begin taking to the public. The next step would be for Council approval and then the process to take the document to the public for input. Once input was obtained from the public, changes would be made if necessary, to prepare for final adoption by Council. Mr. Hozey informed the group that if there were a significant amount of changes to be made, this group might need to meet again to discuss those changes.

Motion made by Commissioner Stramm to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Councilman Grossman. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Motion made by Vice Mayor Bennett to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Councilman Buchholz. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:29 p.m.

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Mayor Dize

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Community Relations Manager