



TOWN COUNCIL/PLANNING COMMISSION

Strategic Planning Retreat – Day 2

Cape Charles Volunteer Fire Company

February 7, 2021

12:00 p.m.

At 12:11 p.m., Vice Mayor Steve Bennett reconvened the Town Council Strategic Planning Retreat. In addition to Vice Mayor Bennett, present were Councilmen Bannon, Buchholz, Follmer and Grossman, and Councilwoman Holloway. Also, present were Town Manager John Hozey, Town Clerk Libby Hume, and Community Relations Manager Jen Lewis.

Planning Commission Chair Bill Stramm reconvened the Planning Commission Work Session. In addition to Commissioner Stramm, present were Commissioners Butta, D'Amico and Holloway.

The department heads in attendance were: Capital Projects Manager Bob Panek, Public Works Manager John Lockwood, and Treasurer Deborah Pocock.

There was one member of the public in attendance.

Temperature checks were done on each attendee.

John Hozey stated that he tried to consolidate the work completed yesterday adding that he was impressed with the amount of work done.

The Future View was reviewed and the percentages for the future economy were revised to: Tourism/Local Spending 45%, Mixed Commercial 35%, Agriculture/Aquaculture 2%, Industrial/Manufacturing(year-round) 18%.

The updated vision and goals were reviewed. There was discussion regarding each goal: 1) To retain the small town character of Cape Charles; 2) To maintain the authentic character of the historic district; 3) To protect and maintain the beach; 4) To protect and maintain the harbor; 5) To plan for coastal resiliency; 6) To protect green/open space infrastructure; 7) To retain and expand businesses in a business friendly environment; 8) To advance affordable housing for younger families and workforce; 9) To promote educational, recreational, and social activities; and 10) To meet our residents' expectation for Town services. Some refinements were made to the goals and some objectives and metrics were added to several of the goals.

Goal #1 – To retain the small town character of Cape Charles.

There was much discussion regarding volunteerism and how to recognize the volunteers for their efforts. In the past, the Town held an appreciation event for members of the board and commission, but it was suggested that this be expanded to include volunteers for other community service organizations. Some other ideas were: i) Invitation for the Town's boards and commission, and other volunteer groups to come to a Town Council meeting to provide annual or semi-annual reports; ii) Volunteer appreciation event in the summer; iii) Possibly recognizing a volunteer of the year; iv) Feature a board or commissioner in the Gazette, possibly done on a quarterly basis; v) Annual strategic plan forum for all community civic groups; and vi) When new members were added to a board or the commission, publish a profile of the new member.

To increase citizen engagement, the following ideas were suggested: i) Post meetings as Facebook events. Residents felt much more connected with the ability to view the meetings on Facebook; ii) Use the utility bill to send information/announcement to the residents on a monthly basis. Clip the upcoming events portion from the Gazette and include it in the monthly utility bills; iii) Provide name tags for Council, Commission and Board members to wear during events to identify them to the citizens. Commissioner Stramm stated that he had a laminated Planning Commission name badge that he could wear; iii) Hold quarterly Town Hall meetings. It was noted that the Town held Town Hall meetings in past years with various department heads there to answer questions; iv) More presence from the police department and volunteer fire department, etc.

Ideas to maintain/improve walkability were: i) Continue the community trail program; ii) sidewalk infill; iii) rails and trails; iv) maintain the existing hiking trails around the area.

To foster a safe golf cart culture: i) signage; ii) enforcement issues, especially with underage drivers. Currently, officers escort the underage driver to their parents; iii) requiring golf cart rules be displayed in vacation rental homes. The town has magnets; iv) requiring golf cart rules be included in vacation rental agreements; v) install charging stations and have dedicated parking spaces for golf carts; vi) Golf cart path. Possible public-private partnership with the Cape Charles Brewing Company, Beach Market and others along Stone Road to dedicate area for a golf cart path. The entrance to the golf cart path must be on Stone Road to be successful.

Promote Quirky Events: i) Thoughts were that the Town did a good job; ii) Need to get to the point where all businesses and organizations work together with various events so they were not all scheduled on the same date; iii) The new Cape Charles Virginia's Cape website would have an area where people could add their own events. This site could possibly help with scheduling because someone who went online to add their event could see other events that might already be scheduled. This could be a centralized event calendar; iv) The Town could post private events scheduled in town venues as well.

Promote Arts and Entertainment: i) Promotion of events doesn't mean financial support, but providing encouragement of arts and assisting by making venues available; ii) The current \$100 fee for use of facilities were currently waived for non-profit organizations. It was noted that the fee needed to be increased; iii) Provide services from Town offices for events. Staff currently provides assistance for various events; iv) The Town needed to recover costs for events scheduled for for-profit entities. This would be discussed further during the budget sessions.

Homestay: i) Study short-term rentals and provide recommendations.

Goal #2 – To maintain the authentic character of the historic district.

Encourage the mission of historic preservation organizations/efforts: i) Invite groups/organizations to come to provide briefings to the Town Council; ii) Something needed to be done regarding boat parking on the streets since this was a safety issue. Council started working on this issue, but the Town needed an alternate location for people to store their boats; iii) Review the study from Christopher Newport University regarding their perceptions on preservation in Cape Charles; iv) Review and update ordinances and historic guidelines.

Goal #3 – To protect and maintain the beach.

Prevent Erosion – potential projects: i) The Town had a detailed dune management plan, but the beach was not discussed much in the plan. Need to update the beach/dune management plan. The Wetlands Board needed to be contacted to update the plan to include more about the beach. The public works department would be included in the meetings to provide input; ii) Continue to survey the beach; iii) Continue to budget for sand replenishment.

Goal #4 – To protect and maintain the harbor.

Promote a healthy balance of commercial and recreational users: i) Limited opportunities to promote commercial use in the harbor at large. Some restraints on use of slips. Discounted rates for commercial watermen; ii) Encourage a cooperative market for watermen to sell to the public. Need to research, but limited resources with staff, money, etc.; ii) A possible RFP to see if there was an interest for a commercial coop at the harbor; iii) Review and update the harbor district ordinance and guidelines.

Goal #5 – To plan for coastal resiliency. Develop an implemental plan.

Goal #6 – To protect green/open space infrastructure. Develop an implementa plan.

Goal #7 – To retain and expand businesses in a business-friendly environment.

Improve business access to workforce resources: i) Develop programs with education facilities. Cape Charles Main Street was currently working on this; ii) Job fair with the Northampton County Chamber of Commerce; iii) Develop internships and apprenticeships with Department of Labor and Industry (DOLI).

Goal #8 – To advance affordable housing for younger families and workforce.

i) Participate in regional housing study and evaluate recommendations. The Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission was currently working on this; ii) Review for ordinance barriers to workforce housing and evaluate recommendations (initiative from Northampton County); iii) Explore viability of workforce housing ordinances.

Goal #9 – To promote educational, recreational, and social activities.

i) Market and manage available venues; ii) Town sponsored events such as the July 4 activities.

Goal #10 – To meet our residents' expectation for Town services.

i) Establish service standards/response time for certain services; ii) Employee customer service training and other types of training/cross-training; iii) Tracking system for citizens' concerns; iv) Promote citizen use of tracking system; v) Follow-up to Town Council with citizen comments during meetings.

John Hozey stated that the objectives portion was done and he would compile everything for review. He had scheduled a work session after the February 18 Town Council Regular Meeting, but the next steps were probably more involved so he recommended another Saturday. Some dates were discussed and the consensus was to schedule day 3 of the strategic planning retreat for Saturday, February 20.

Vice Mayor Bennett thanked everyone for their participation, especially Libby Hume and Jen Lewis, and went on as follows: i) He was very encouraged by what had been accomplished this weekend; ii) He was also very encouraged that John Hozey would follow-up on this and added that Mr. Hozey did a fantastic job facilitating; and iii) It was a great effort by everyone and he looked forward to completion and implementation of the plan.

Motion made by Councilman Buchholz, seconded by Councilwoman Holloway, to adjourn the Town Council/Planning Commission Strategic Planning Retreat. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Motion made by Commissioner Holloway, seconded by Commissioner Butta, to adjourn the Town Council/Planning Commission Strategic Planning Retreat. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

The meeting adjourned at 4:21 p.m.

Vice Mayor Bennett

Town Clerk