

Town of Onancock, Virginia

Planning Commission Meeting

Tuesday

January 16, 2018

5:30 P.M.

Call to Order and Roll Call:

Chairman Fletcher Fosque called the meeting to order at 5:30 P.M.

Commission members Bill Bagwell, Ridgway Dunton, Fletcher Fosque, Judith Grier, were present. Commission member Scott Schreiber arrived late. A quorum was established.

Potential new Commission member Lawrence Frey was invited to attend the meeting but as of this date has not been officially appointed by the Town Council.

Minutes:

Chairman Fosque asked if there were any changes or additions to the September 19, 2017 minutes as presented.

A motion was made by Commission member Bill Bagwell to approve the minutes as presented. Commission member Judith Grier seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

Items of Business:

Comprehensive Plan Review

Section Two: Land Use

Discussion:

Chairman Fosque started the discussion of this section by stating this is the most important section of the plan; it lays out where we want to go as a town. He stated that if your town plan disagrees with your zoning ordinance then it could create legal issues, The town could wind up in court if something goes against the plan. He wanted the group to think about what they want Onancock to look like in five years, ten years, let's think about a long-term plan. He asked the group what they envisioned for the residential areas, the downtown area, the highway business area, the wharf area. He asked; do we want to be a tourist town, do we want to be more residential, do we want to promote more people living downtown, more people living in the B2

district or do we want to maintain the status quo? He also stated that the Town has a capital improvement plan for the nuts and bolts of what goes on in town.

Discussion turned to the wharf area of town and its' importance to the town. Commission member Bill Bagwell stated many people are visiting by boat and Chairman Fosque stated that many more visit the town by car. A question was asked, do we want everything about the town to be about the wharf? A lot of money has been spent on the wharf, much of it through grants.

Commission member Judith Grier asked what kind of towns the other commission members visited that they like. Discussion followed. Cape Charles was discussed.

Commission member Grier asked if there had ever been any focus groups with the community to see what residents want the town to look like in the future. She asked Commission members what they wanted the town to look like in the future.

Chairman Fosque said there are a lot of empty buildings. He would like the buildings in the downtown business area filled and asked how we could better promote the town. He said the town is looking at the Mainstreet Program.

Commission member Bagwell said tax incentives might work. Discussion followed on business incentives for new businesses and what could be done for businesses that have been here for a while.

Commission member Ridgway Dunton said he sees small changes happening but not big changes. He said some of the long-time residents might not like big changes.

Chairman Fosque asked if having more apartments in town was something we need to look at. More diverse offerings might attract new residents.

Commission member Scott Schreiber said the town had some great assets and asked what is the Towns' responsibility and what is the private sectors responsibility. A comment was made to make it easier for the private sector to do things and make sure the public sector stays out of the way.

Discussion of the wharf followed: We have a single ramp, do we want/need more ramps, parking, not enough, do we want/need more, where do you get more. Will we be a working wharf, a tourist destination or a mix of both, the gravel business at the wharf has good points and bad points; the business uses barges, the barge traffic keeps the channel from silting in thus allowing pleasure boats and sailboats access to the Onancock Creek, if the business stays you cannot expand activities at the wharf. Waterfront property is expensive, much of what the town needs in order to expand is held privately. Limited space at the wharf is an issue.

Discussion of the Enterprise zone and its function of creating new jobs.

Discussion of internet access, broad band, WiFi and phone service followed. Improvements in this area could entice new residents to the town.

Town Manager William Kerbin asked if the commission wanted to look at boundary adjustments.

Chairman Fosque wanted to set a goal of June 2018 to finish the plan because he is going off the Commission as of July 01, 2018.

Commission member Schreiber asked if there were any examples available of other plans from other communities. The commission could look at Cape Charles, Virginia, maybe Smithfield, Virginia, or Saint Paul, Virginia. All agreed to get some examples from other communities. A question was asked about looking at plans from other states such as Northport, Long Island in New York. Chairman Fosque stated that Virginia does not have home rule and the Dillion Rule really restricts what towns can do, the state pulls the strings for us.


Public Comment:

None

Adjourn:


Commission member Judith Grier made a motion to adjourn. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:32 P.M.



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Fletcher Fosque, Chair



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Mariellen Mearsheimer Deputy Clerk