



TOWN OF ONANCOCK

15 North Street
Onancock, VA 23417

Meeting Notice

Planning Commission Meeting

Tuesday

January 21, 2020

at

5:30 p.m.

The Onancock Planning Commission will hold a meeting Tuesday, January 21, 2020 at 5:30 P.M. The meeting will be held in the Town Hall Council Chambers at 15 North Street, Onancock, Virginia 23417

Town of Onancock , Virginia
Planning Commission
AGENDA
January 21, 2020
5:30 p.m.

1. Call to Order and Roll Call
2. Review of the Minutes from the October 15, 2019 Meeting
3. Items of Business
 - a. Discussion of the Comprehensive Plan -Visioning Session
4. Public Comment
5. Adjourn

Town of Onancock
Planning Commission Meeting
Tuesday
October 15, 2019
5:30 P.M.

Call to Order and Roll Call:

Chairman Judith Grier called the meeting to order at 5:30 P.M.

Commission members Bill Bagwell, Robert Bloxom, Larry Frey, Judith Grier and Matt Spuck were present. Commission members Ridgway Dunton and Scott Schreiber were absent. A quorum was established.

Town Manager William Kerbin and Deputy Clerk Mariellen Mearsheimer were present.

Town Mayor Fletcher Fosque and Onancock residents Jim McGowan and John Bodie were also in attendance.

Minutes:

Chairman Grier asked for a motion to approve the June 18, 2019 minutes.

Commission member Robert Bloxom made a motion to approve the minutes as presented.

Commission member Matt Spuck seconded the motion. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

Items of Business:

Discussion of the Comprehensive Plan

Discussion centered around the Comprehensive Plan Workshop for residents held at the Historic Onancock School on Tuesday September 17, 2019 from 5:30 P.M. until 7:00 P.M. Chairman Grier organized the information gathered from the three discussion questions (Question #1; What do you like about Onancock? What are Onancock's strengths? Question #2; What do you not like about Onancock? What are Onancock's weaknesses? Question #3; What are three to five goals for Onancock that would help build on the strengths you identified and fix the weaknesses?) into five workshop themes; #1 Quality of Life, #2 Business and Cultural, #3 Transportation, #4 Housing and Neighborhoods and #5 Town Services / Governance. Chairman Grier then led the discussion based on the five workshop themes. One result of the discussion was the importance of gathering data in order to map out existing land use in town and the need to get someone to count. Examples given of what to count included developed land and undeveloped land, residential properties and commercial properties, occupied and unoccupied buildings, buildings that are owner occupied and buildings that are rented, the condition of buildings, derelict and abandoned buildings and accessory buildings.

Jim McGowan stated he is working on a draft of the Comprehensive Plan. Chairman Grier thanked him for his volunteer work on behalf of the Town. Mr. McGowan stated the next meeting of the Planning Commission should be to draft a vision for the Town based on comments collected from the residents.

Public Comment:

Mayor Fletcher Fosque requested the Planning Commission take up a discussion about the Historic Preservation District. He stated the Commission should include it in the Comprehensive Plan and decide whether to pursue more regulations.

Mr. John Bodie stated the importance of having a cohesive, overarching vision of what we want the Town to look like in the future, a solid theme we want to reach for, then sharing the vision and finding a way of communicating it.

Adjourn:

Chairman Grier asked for a motion to adjourn. Commission member Robert Bloxom made a motion to adjourn. Commission member Bill Bagwell seconded the motion. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 P.M.

Judith Grier, Chair

Mariellen Mearsheimer, Deputy Clerk

Meeting Notes: September 17, 2019
Town of Onancock Comprehensive Plan Workshop
Historic Onancock School
5:30 – 7:00 pm

- The workshop was facilitated by town volunteer, Jim McGowan
- Notes were captured by Judith Grier

Three questions were provided to the participants in the workshop; participants were seated at tables and worked as group, by table. Agenda was provided at the start of the meeting and each question was allotted discussion time, by table, with a report-out to the audience. The notes that follow are the notes captured from the report-out.

1. What do you like about Onancock? What are Onancock's strengths? (10 minutes)

Small town feel
Sidewalks
Walkability
Marina
Quaint feel/but cosmopolitan feel (restaurants)
Artisan
Ker Place – history
Theatre
Farmers Market
Year-round restaurants
Playhouse
Water Quality
Public Space
Playfields/Ballfields
Police Force
Affordability of houses
Nature and access to nature
Neighbors
ESYCC is close-by
Number of galleries in town and in the 23417 zip code
Events: Ker, ESCC, High School, Restaurants
Safety
Quiet
Raise a family
Old houses
No traffic light in town
Dog friendly
Sense of community
Feel like part of a group
Businesses

Donuts
Ballfield
Marina
Elevation
Gardens
HOS
Ker

2. What do you not like about Onancock? What are Onancock's weaknesses?

Lack of affordable housing
Lack of accommodations i.e. hotels
Northeast Onancock needs attention; playgrounds
Lack of sidewalks
Derelict buildings
Lack of winter activities
Limited town budget
Limited recycling
Lack of consistent zone enforcement
Need for more events: fireworks!
Lack of crosswalks
No pedestrian safety downtown
Speeding: Ames Street to the wharf
Town currently unappealing
No variety of stores in Town – little retail
No drugstore
No grocery store
Sunday and Monday are business kill: nothing open
Abandon properties
Need more parking
No more House of Deals
Lack of hotels
Lack of sidewalks
Lack of variety of businesses
Lack of public wi-fi
North St and Market St is a dangerous crossing; no real crosswalk
Speeders
Runoff issues
General infrastructure lacking
Lack of variety in: age, racial groups, many don't feel welcome in Onancock
All white people, others do not feel welcome
Growing number of rundown houses, damaged, yards unkempt
Large number of homes for sale
Declining number of young families
Town water and sewer a concern; expensive
Mosquitos increasing (are we still spraying?)
Drainage problems in certain areas
Empty storefronts and buildings
Rundown/vacant/depressed housing stock

Number of houses only rentals as “group homes”
Illegal rentals/high turnover/overcrowding
No grocery store
Lack of assistance available to citizens
Communication by/from Town Government (lack)

3. What are three to five goals for Onancock that would help build on the strengths you identified and fix the weaknesses?

Consistent enforcement of ordinances, building codes, and zoning
Make an effort to preserve historic character of buildings
Town make decisions full-time residential community: find ways to fill empty buildings (incentives)
Work NE Onancock, remove the name “Boundary Avenue” and rename
Public Safety Issues: speed bumps, cross walks, improve the intersection re: visibility of North St and Market St (enforce parking)
Better enforcement overall: traffic, codes, etc
Incentivize businesses to come to Onancock
Electronic meter reading of H2O
Partner with ES diversity, make town open and inviting
Work with the landlords to reduce multiple families living in single family housing
Real need for transitional assisted living housing
Shore/EShore issue: More regional cooperation, kids leaving and don’t return, building cohesive communities
More tourism
Community picnic: covered dish, music, etc. (like Jamestown event, 2007)
Attract more businesses
Citizen committee board for obtaining grants (state and federal \$\$)
Community events; utilize the old fairgrounds
Reduce the number of deteriorating houses
Goal: increase efficiency of bug spraying by spraying at dusk
Partnerships: work for the Eastern Shore to be the best place for all citizens
Challenges: healthcare, poverty
Work with Main Street initiative

Town of Onancock Comprehensive Plan Workshop

Historic Onancock School

September 17, 2019

WORKSHOP THEMES

1. QUALITY of LIFE

- + Small town feel
- + Walkability
- + Quaint feel/but cosmopolitan feel (restaurants)
- + Artisan Community
- + Safety
- + Quiet
- + Raise a family
- + Old houses
- + Dog friendly
- + Neighbors
- + Sense of community
- + Feel like part of a group
- + Gardens
- + Nature and access to nature
- + Water Quality
- + Elevation
- Town currently unappealing
- Derelict buildings
- Abandoned properties
- Lack of variety in: age, racial groups, many don't feel welcome in Onancock
- All white people, others do not feel welcome
- Declining number of young families
- Lack of assistance available to citizens

GOALS:

- Challenges: healthcare, poverty
- Partner with ES diversity, make town open and inviting
- Community picnic: covered dish, music, etc. (like Jamestown event, 2007)

2. BUSINESS & CULTURAL

- + Marina
- + Ker Place – history
- + Theatre
- + Donuts
- + Farmers Market

- + Year-round restaurants
- + Playhouse
- + ESYCC is close-by
- + Number of galleries in town and in the 23417 zip code
- + Events: Ker, ESCC, High School, Restaurants
- + Businesses
- + Historic Onancock School
- Lack of winter activities
- Need for more events: fireworks!
- Lack of accommodations, i.e. hotels
- Lack of hotels
- No variety of stores in Town – little retail
- Lack of variety of businesses
- No drugstore
- No grocery store
- No more House of Deals
- Sunday and Monday are business kill: nothing open
- Empty storefronts and buildings
- Lack of public Wi-Fi

GOALS:

- Make an effort to preserve historic character of buildings
- Town make decisions full-time residential community: find ways to fill empty buildings (incentives)
- Incentivize businesses to come to Onancock
- More tourism
- Attract more businesses
- Community events; utilize the old fairgrounds

3. TRANSPORTATION

- + Sidewalks
- + No traffic light in town
- Lack of sidewalks
- Lack of crosswalks
- No pedestrian safety downtown
- North St and Market St is a dangerous crossing; no real crosswalk
- Speeders
- Speeding: Ames Street to the wharf
- Need more parking

GOALS:

- Public Safety Issues: speed bumps, cross walks, improve the intersection re: visibility of North St and Market St (enforce parking)
- Better enforcement overall: traffic, codes, etc.

4. HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS

- + Affordability of houses
- Lack of affordable housing
- Northeast Onancock needs attention; playgrounds
- Growing number of rundown houses, damaged, yards unkempt
- Large number of homes for sale
- Rundown/vacant/depressed housing stock
- Number of houses only rentals as “group homes”
- Illegal rentals/high turnover/overcrowding

GOALS:

- Work NE Onancock, remove the name “Boundary Avenue” and rename
- Work with the landlords to reduce multiple families living in single family housing
- Real need for transitional assisted living housing
- Reduce the number of deteriorating houses

5. TOWN SERVICES / GOVERNANCE

- + Police Force
- + Marina
- + Public Space
- + Playfields/Ballfields
- Limited town budget
- Limited recycling
- Lack of consistent zoning enforcement
- Runoff issues
- General infrastructure lacking
- Town water and sewer a concern; expensive
- Mosquitos increasing (are we still spraying?)
- Drainage problems in certain areas
- Communication by/from Town Government (lack)

GOALS:

- Consistent enforcement of ordinances, building codes, and zoning
- Electronic meter reading of H2O
- Shore/Eastern Shore issue: More regional cooperation, kids leaving and don't return, building cohesive communities
- Citizen committee board for obtaining grants (state and federal \$\$)
- Increase efficiency of bug spraying by spraying at dusk
- Partnerships: work for the Eastern Shore to be the best place for all citizens
- Work with Main Street initiative