



Town Council Work Session

February 28, 2007
4:00 p.m.

At approximately 4:00 p.m. in Town Council Chambers, Vice-Mayor Bruce Evans called to order the Work Session of Town Council. In addition to Vice-Mayor Evans present were Council woman Mary Harris, and Councilmen Bannon, and Burdiss. Councilman Elliott arrived at approximately 4:20 p.m.

Planning Commission Vice-Chairman Joan Natali called to order the Planning Commission's Work Session. Planning Commissioners present were Karen Davis, Joan Natali and Bruce Evans. Chairman Tom Bonadeo arrived at approximately 4:15 p.m.

Vice-Mayor Evans then introduced VDOT officials Jack Adams and Tim Holloway. He stated the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the idea of an at-grade crossing at Fig Street.

Town Planner Jason Pruitt summarized the situation. He stated in 1990 the Town entered into an annexation agreement with Brown and Root who were the owners of what now is known as the Bay Creek property. Part of the agreement included the public benefit of extending Fig Street south to enhance the north/south connection of the Brown and Root property and the Historic District of the town. He further expressed the alignment of the overpass known as the "Hump", presented some issues for vehicles crossing the railroad tracks. Mr. Pruitt acknowledged that VDOT's general policy was to keep vehicular and railroad traffic separate.

The area was designated on a map for clarification. Bruce Evans indicated there had been a proposal on the table to extend the Historic District to encompass property on the south side of the railroad track. Mr. Pruitt also clarified the 20-20 plan did not include information about the Hump, but did address the at-grade crossing. Councilman Evans interjected that Dick Foster, a local developer, had agreed to consider the funding of the project if approved. He further explained the idea was to leave the Hump as a pedestrian overpass and to be used for emergency vehicles. The panoramic view was also mentioned.

A representative of Bay Creek summarized the Master Plan of Bay Creek with emphasis on the Village which would be a project encompassing both residential and commercial. He mentioned the co-ordination of their land use plan with that of the Harbor District and the Historic District. A hard look was taken at the map of the area with future planned expansion presented.

Tim Holloway expressed his thoughts of a multi-use trail with its own Hump being more desirable to support the growth projected than the proposal presented. Chairman Tom Bonadeo agreed that at-grade crossings could present a host of safety problems, but stated coming from Randolph Avenue to Mason Ave, it was difficult to maneuver the 90 degree turn to cross the track. He mentioned the stop signs and the streets were not aligned to make the crossing comfortable making the area dangerous.

The commercial traffic generated from Bay Shore Concrete and the traffic of excursion and freight railroad traffic were discussed. The speed limits for Mason Avenue, the Hump and Old Cape Charles Road were addressed with emphasis placed on the sharp turn just south of the old Cape Charles elementary school. Jack Adams explained to lower speed limits there was lengthy traffic study process.

The selection of Fig Street for the at-grade crossing was justified by factors such as the working harbor area, the old dump site and the proposed railroad terminus.

Jack Adams made the point there may be alternate solutions to an at-grade crossing, such as a prefabricated tunneling system, or moving the position of the hump keeping the original in place. He admitted some of these alternatives could pose to be more costly than an at-grade crossing, but would handle considerable more traffic as is expected due to the proposed growth of the area. Mr. Adams also pointed out transportation runs in cycles. What is appropriate for today's need will change in 20 years.

Mr. Adams stated to get the changes the Town wanted a clear, quantitative justification needed to be presented. The proposal would need to clearly state that, what was in place no longer takes care of the Town's needs. The proposal should outline the changes needed and how the changes would correct the problem. Further, the proposal must state that the risk was low, was a cost savings over any other alternative and was agreed to by the railroad. Mr. Adams also suggested the industrial traffic issue should be described and that the solution would encompass the build-out.

Tim Holloway suggested the proposal should also include that the build-out would increase the pedestrian traffic and for safety reasons the alternative would be the best solution.

With this information, Mr. Adams could then approach VDOT officials for a waiver.

Steve Bennett suggested packaging the round-about, the at-grade crossing and straightening the sharp curve on Old Cape Charles Road.

The topic of lowering the speed limit on Old Cape Charles Road was discussed. It was stated that industrial traffic also uses that roadway. Lowering the speed limit may impede the industrial business.

The meeting ended with Tim Holloway explaining Federal budgeting. The budget pays for the bridge that is in the worst repair.

Motion made by Karen Davis, seconded by Joan Natali and unanimously approved to adjourn the work session of Planning Commission.

Motion made by Council woman Harris, seconded by Councilman Bannon and unanimously approved to adjourn the work session of Town Council.

Vice-Mayor

Chairman Planning Commission

Town Clerk