



TOWN COUNCIL

Retreat

April 17, 2008

American Legion Post 56

8:00 a.m.

At approximately 8:00 a.m. in the Social Hall of American Legion Post 56, Vice Mayor Bruce Evans called to order day two of the Town Council Retreat. In addition to Vice Mayor Evans present were Councilmen Bannon, Burdiss, Brown, Dudley and Elliott and Town Council Candidates Bennett and Veber. Also in attendance were Town Manager Joe Vaccaro, Assistant Town Manager Heather Arcos and Town Clerk Joy Pelletier. There were also several staff members as well as several members of the public present.

Treasurer Paul Skolnick updated the Council members regarding his budget process during breakfast while awaiting the first speaker.

UPDATES FROM THE BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Historic District Review Board ("HDRB")

Town Planner Tom Bonadeo informed the Town Council that the HDRB had been busy over the past year. They have reviewed applications for approximately five (5) new houses and one (1) remodel in the Historic District. There were 529 homes listed as contributing properties in the Cape Charles Historic District, six (6) of which had to be demolished due to neglect for the safety of the community. There was much discussion regarding setting a policy to enable the Town to try to save these buildings. Vice Mayor Evans suggested having the Planning Commission and the HDRB work together to develop a policy to save these structures from demolition. Vice Mayor Evans went on to suggest that this issue be placed on a future Town Council meeting agenda for further discussion.

Planning Commission

Planning Commission Chairwoman Cela Burge reviewed the Planning Commission activities over the last year stating that Commissioner Andie Morgan joined the Commission this year and having Tom Bonadeo, who was previously the Chairman of the Planning Commission prior to being hired as the Town Planner, was a blessing since he already knew the Town and its ordinances, etc. Chairwoman Burge stated that some of the recommendations made by the Planning Commission included: i) rezoning for the Harbor Development; ii) Conditional Use Permits for Bayshore Concrete and 309 Mason Avenue; iii) creation of the Harbor District; and iv) adoption of the Fence language. Chairwoman Burge also stated that the Planning Commission worked with several other groups regarding the following: i) Master Trail Plan; ii) Harbor Plan; and iii) Tree Plan and these plans were incorporated into the Town's Comprehensive Plan. Chairwoman Burge went on to review the current items being discussed as follows: i) Parking studies including the alley program; ii) Zoning Ordinance modification re: Accessory Dwellings; iii) Completion of the Comprehensive Plan Review/Update; iv) Updating the Zoning Map; v) Corridor Overlay for Route 184 and Old Cape Charles Road; vi) Development of a Pattern Book to establish guidelines for development in the Harbor District; vii) Conditional Use Permit application from Landmark Development. Chairwoman Burge went on to review several items that are on the horizon: i) affordable housing issues; ii) Harbor Historic District Review Board has been formed but need some training; iii) continued coordination with the County re: proposed zoning within the County especially in regards to the Town Edge; iv) Capital Improvements Program so Planning Commission can offer

recommendations to the Town Council and staff; v) concerned re: enforcement of existing ordinances; vi) Population Study; and vii) staying focused to complete the Comprehensive Plan and opening up channels to obtain public input. There was much discussion regarding the Town's population comparing the U.S. Census data vs. the Town's utility data vs. data collected by the Planning Commission in a door-to-door survey. Chairwoman Burge concluded by stating that the Planning Commission will continue to work on this issue and Tom Bonadeo stated that he would share the data from the Planning Commission with Treasurer Paul Skolnick to review with the tax data.

Library Board

Librarian Ann Rutledge presented an overview of the library and stated that currently there is one (1) full time and one (1) part time employee. Ms. Rutledge gave various statistics regarding circulation, the number of visitors, the number of computer users, etc. showing that the numbers are growing each year. Ms. Rutledge informed the Council members that the library has 14, 773 items in their collection which includes adult fiction & non-fiction, large print titles, children's fiction & non-fiction, Spanish language titles, CDs, DVDs, videocassettes, a small graphics collection, 30 magazines and 2 newspapers. Ms. Rutledge explained their affiliation with the Eastern Shore Public Library in which they can share titles with the other libraries on the Eastern Shore using the online catalog, etc. Ms. Rutledge described various programs offered at the library as follows: i) a weekly toddler story time; ii) a migrant head-start story time; iii) a Dr. Seuss birthday party sponsored by the Women's Club; iv) a summer reading program which included adults; v) various computer classes which are well attended; vi) an AARP driving course; vii) Halloween Trick-or-Treating; viii) guest speakers; and ix) youth, teen and family movies. Ms. Rutledge stated that the library was also involved in an outreach program providing used books to: i) Heritage Acres; ii) Kiptopeke State Park; iii) Northampton County Regional Jail; iv) Shore Memorial Hospital; and v) delivering books to the home-bound. Ms. Rutledge went on to state that the library receives publicity from the new sign on the front doors, various newspaper articles and advertisements, the Cape Charles Happenings by Joan Natali and the new Cape Charles Gazette. Ms. Rutledge stated that they accomplish a lot of things with the help of volunteers who help cover the desk, shelve books and help with events. The Friends of the Library, which was created in 2003, also helps with funding and they donated two (2) movie screens and a projector, which are used for the movie nights, and a laminating machine. Ms. Rutledge also stated that the Library Board is extremely supportive. Ms. Rutledge informed the Town Council that the biggest challenge for the library is the lack of space. With 1350 SF, there is no space for new materials and there is a constant struggle to clean out books that do not get circulated. It is difficult for some programs and the Catholic and Methodist Churches have been generous in letting the library use their church halls for some activities. There are no meeting facilities and no place for people to gather, whether they are elderly, teens or children. There is no space for people waiting to use a computer to sit and the computers are very popular and there is no space to bring in any additional computers. As time goes on, with new people coming in to the community, the need for a new facility will become more and more evident. Another challenge is the small staff and having to use volunteers to cover the desk. Ms. Rutledge concluded by stating that her goal for the future was to have a new, larger facility for the library and that to facilitate this goal, the Friends of the Library hold annual fundraising activities and they are actively seeking grant opportunities.

There was some discussion regarding the services and supplies provided by the Eastern Shore Public Library and Ms. Rutledge informed the Council members that funding is

provided by Accomack and Northampton counties and some State funding, but that the Eastern Shore libraries were underfunded compared to other areas of the State.

There was much discussion regarding the space needs for the library and it was stated that 3000 SF would be a minimum. Ms. Rutledge informed the Council that the Eastern Shore Public Library was 13,000 SF and the new library in Nassawadox was 3500 SF and they have a very small meeting room. Councilman Burdiss stated that the Council was discussing new facilities for the Municipal Center and that a consideration could be to include the library in the same facility with shared meeting rooms.

UPDATES FROM TOWN DEPARTMENTS

Code Enforcement

Code Enforcement Official Doug Smith briefed the Town Council on the Code Enforcement activities during the past year as follows: i) 200 permits were issued with construction costs of approximately \$4M; ii) \$140K in fees were collected, \$90K of which were tap fees; iii) \$9100 in code enforcement fees were charged and \$5400 was collected; iv) started a Basement Sump Inspection Program and cited 41 cases, 26 of which are now closed; v) started a Grease Trap Inspection Program and cited 11 cases, all of which are now closed; vi) started an annual Fire Sprinkler/Fire Alarm/Suppression System/Elevator Inspection Program and cited 51 total cases, all of which are closed; vii) completed 465 new construction inspections; viii) completed 22 zoning clearances; and ix) completed 122 erosion and sedimentation control inspections. Doug Smith briefly touched on an upcoming code enforcement case at 11 Park Row regarding the easement. Doug Smith informed the Council that he is the lead person for the Town's Emergency Operations Plan and is focusing on procedures to be completed 24-72 hours after an emergency event and that he has obtained approval to use the Municipal Building as an Emergency Operations Center. Doug Smith went on to state that he is working on the Fire Inspection Program and Jeb Brady has attended the Fire Marshall School and is scheduled to go to the National Fire Academy in order to become certified as a fire inspector. Doug Smith went on to list the educational accomplishments regarding code enforcement, FEMA, building and fire inspections for himself and Jeb Brady and he informed the Council that he had obtained a BS degree in Business Administration.

There was some discussion regarding the old Coast Guard housing and Joe Vaccaro stated that he has been working on this issue for some time and he's been told that there is no way for the Town to acquire that property since it is federal property. The buildings will be demolished at some time in the future. In the meantime, the Town has no authority over the property. The most we can expect from this property are several sheds and playground equipment which will be donated.

The discussion next focused on vacant properties in the Town in which back taxes and fees are owed. Doug Smith stated that in many cases, it is very difficult to track down the owners of the property. There was much discussion regarding the Town's right to seize the property for back taxes, etc. and Ms. Burge stated that there is a provision for the Town to seize property, after three (3) years of delinquency, if the amount owed is greater than 50% of the value of the property. Vice Mayor Evans added that with the recent reassessments, it would be difficult to reach 50% delinquency on any property. The Council agreed to research the Town's rights and revisit this issue at a later date.

Planning Department

Tom Bonadeo reported on several “behind the scenes” responsibilities of the Planning Department in dealing with zoning and development of new subdivisions, etc. Tom Bonadeo went on to report that even though the development of new properties had slowed down from several years ago, he is still seeing some activity regarding commercial development.

Vice Mayor Evans inquired about the Broadband Program and asked Tom Bonadeo to explain the program to the Council. Tom Bonadeo informed the Council that the program entails a statewide network of fiber optic cable being run through rural areas of the state from southwestern Virginia, through Maryland and across the bay to the Eastern Shore and down through the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel into the Hampton Roads area and was initially developed to connect the various NASA sites together and is being funded with federal and state money. Cape Charles has applied for a grant for approximately \$500K to bring the connection into Cape Charles and from there a third party company will be named to offer connections to individual households and businesses. Included as part of this grant are 20 computers for the Town Library for use in training, etc.

Harbor

Harbormaster Smitty Dize gave an overview of improvements made at the Harbor over the last three (3) years as follows: i) a new Harbor office to replace the old shack that once served as the office; ii) installed fuel pumps owned and run by the Town; iii) video surveillance cameras have been installed; iv) safety stations, including fire extinguishers and life rings, have been installed around the Harbor; v) electric pedestals have been installed; and vi) the docks being widened. Smitty Dize went on to discuss the boat slip rentals stating that two (2) longtime renters have given up their slips and another is expected to become available but he has a waiting list for slips. Smitty Dize explained that he currently offers slips first, for commercial use, next to Town taxpayers, then to all other interested parties. Councilman Elliott stated that he felt that the slips should be available on a first come first served basis but when Vice Mayor Evans asked the Council members whether this topic should be added to a future meeting agenda, it was agreed to keep the policy as is. Smitty Dize informed the Council that the Virginia Marine Resources Commission would be meeting on April 22nd to decide whether crab dredging would be allowed this winter. If dredging is not allowed, it would impact the projected income for the Harbor but he stated that he has a “Plan B” to advertise the boat slip rentals for the winter months. Ms. Joan Natali suggested that if Smitty has to resort to his Plan B, the Town Council should do what they can to encourage the County to reduce the rate for boat tax. Vice Mayor Evans stated that he believes the County Supervisors will be looking into this issue. Smitty Dize concluded by informing the Council that he met with the captain of the vessel Godspeed which will be in Cape Charles on June 11-15th and that the vessel would be open to the public on June 14th. Along with the Godspeed, the Schooner Virginia is scheduled to be in Cape Charles and the Pride of Baltimore may be coming also.

Town Clerk

Town Clerk Joy Pelletier informed the Town Council that the biggest accomplishment for this year is the record retention and archiving project being performed by Assistant Town Clerk Linda Carola. Joy Pelletier also reported that Joe Vaccaro has assigned the Human Resources administrative responsibilities to the Clerk’s office which entails much documentation and paperwork. Joy Pelletier went on to inform the Council that she received her certification last year which was a three (3) years process. Joy Pelletier stated that her major concerns are as follows: i) in order to retain her certification she must

complete 40 credit hours per year and explained that a typical 16-week college-level course equated to three (3) credit hours; ii) recording and transcription of minutes for numerous meetings are time consuming and she is responsible for the minutes for the Town Council which meets an average of twice per month, the Planning Commission meets twice per month, the Historic District Review Board meets once per month, the Wetlands Board will be meeting more regularly and the new Harbor Review Board which will be meeting at least once per month. There was much discussion regarding the credit hour requirement for the municipal clerk certification as well as the length of time involved for each meeting. Joy Pelletier added that all Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”) requests come through the Clerk’s office which can be time consuming and all changes to the Town Code, Zoning Ordinance, etc. also come through this office. In the current location, the Clerk’s office also acts as the receptionist and greeter for the entire Town and there are numerous interruptions throughout the day. Joy Pelletier stated that a huge volume of work passes through the office and it is a struggle to complete everything with a staff of one (1) full-time and one (1) part-time employee.

Joe Vaccaro summarized the list of priorities agreed to over the last two (2) days as follows: i) create a graffiti ordinance; ii) Cape Charles Committee on Children and Youth; iii) Economic Statement; iv) alleyways; v) develop a timeframe for STIP and Meatland; vi) Cape Charles High School; vii) the Beach; viii) Library name change; ix) Code 42 modifications; and x) alternative energy. Several new issues that were raised for future consideration are as follows: i) research the Town’s rights to seize property for back taxes, fees, etc. and absentee property owners; ii) code enforcement issues relating to lawn maintenance, etc. for absentee owners and landlords; and iii) including verbatim motions in staff and board recommendations to assist the Town Clerk with minutes.

Vice Mayor Evans suggested, for a future meeting, the possibility of developing a vision statement depicting the direction for the Town and the Council to move toward. Cela Burge informed the Council that the Planning Commission has drafted a vision statement for the Comprehensive Plan and stated that she could provide it for review by the Town Council.

Motion to adjourn day two of the Town Council Retreat made by Councilman Bannon, seconded by Councilman Burdiss and unanimously approved.

Vice Mayor Evans

Town Clerk