



TOWN COUNCIL Retreat / Work Session

Town Hall
November 19, 2008
8:00 a.m.

At approximately 8:00 a.m. at the Town Hall, Vice Mayor Bannon called to order the Town Council Retreat. In addition to Vice Mayor Bannon, present were Mayor Sullivan, Councilmen Bennett, Burdiss, Elliott, Evans and Veber. Also present were Town Manager Joe Vaccaro, Assistant Town Manager Heather Arcos, Town Planner Tom Bonadeo, Treasurer Paul Skolnick and Town Clerk Libby Hume as well as eight (8) members of the public.

Vice Mayor Bannon welcomed everyone to the meeting and stated that he hoped that there will be some in depth discussions regarding the topics.

CAPE CHARLES SCHOOL

Vice Mayor Bannon read a letter from Frank Wendell regarding the possible future of the Cape Charles School as a community center, an enhanced library and multipurpose gymnasium. He suggested a citizens' group dedicated to the restoration of the school as a community center be formed.

Town Planner Tom Bonadeo reviewed the background regarding a plan for adaptive reuse of the school and presented a design by Parham Architects for 14 apartments and space for the library.

There was much discussion regarding saving the school and the fact that the building is deteriorating daily and in danger of having to be demolished due to neglect. The Council members agreed that the citizens' group proposed by Mr. Frank Wendell needs to be given a chance to save the building for use as a community center and library. The Council members will review the report from the A-NPDC at their December meeting and make a decision in January 2009 on how to proceed.

ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCE

Dr. Maria Papadakis, Director of the Center for Energy and Environmental Sustainability at James Madison University, gave a detailed presentation on solar and wind energy and informed the Council members that she had submitted an application for a \$1M grant for the Town of Cape Charles for consulting work to determine the feasibility of using wind turbines to generate electricity for the Town.

Mayor Sullivan left at approximately 10:30 a.m.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST ACT

Attorney Mike Sterling gave a presentation regarding the Conflict of Interest Act ("COIA") and reviewed a number of hypothetical scenarios for discussion by the Council members. Mike Sterling stressed that a violation of COIA will subject individuals to prosecution for a misdemeanor and fines and any action taken by the Town can be voided due to impropriety.

TELEVISIONING TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS

Tom Bonadeo reviewed the findings of his research on this topic to the Council members and downloaded a Virginia Beach Town Council meeting over the Internet as an example. Our major obstacles are the lack of a permanent location for Town Council meetings and the prohibitive costs associated with the needed equipment and staff involved to produce a video feed. Tom Bonadeo stated that an audio feed would be a less expensive approach to broadcasting the Town Council meetings over the Internet utilizing some of the equipment we already have. After some further discussion, Tom Bonadeo agreed to research the costs and to determine the needed equipment to provide an audio feed to the citizens of Cape Charles to download from our website.

CURRENT BUDGETING NEEDS

Treasurer Paul Skolnick presented the Revenue and Expense Review containing the actual figures for the first four (4) months in this fiscal year and projecting the figures for the remaining eight (8) months. There was much discussion regarding the figures presented and several of the Council members requested spreadsheets laying out all anticipated projects and the costs involved, showing any grant funding to make it easier to review and determine the amount of money needed for each project and the budget as a whole.

FINANCING ALTERNATIVES

Paul Skolnick presented several financing alternatives from the Virginia Local Government Finance Corporation (“VML/VACo”) and the USDA Rural Development Programs. There was much discussion regarding the various options presented. Councilman Burdiss stated his concern regarding having a credit line to cover any short fall until long term financing is feasible.

BRIDGEWATER PLAN

Paul Skolnick informed the Council members that Bridgewater, VA is a small business-friendly town near Harrisonburg. Councilman Burdiss stated that at VML conferences, the Bridgewater model comes out as the best model every year and suggested that the Council members review their website, etc. Paul Skolnick pulled up Bridgewater’s website for the Council members to view as well as their annual report which shows the annual budget, a description of projects that have been completed and/or being considered by the town as well as a variety of statistics comparing Bridgewater to other municipalities in Virginia. There was much discussion regarding the impressiveness of the site and several Council members stated they liked the available information and the presentation which is more like a magazine vs. a report making it easier to read. It was agreed that the Council members would provide feedback to Paul Skolnick regarding the information in the annual report so we can develop a similar report for the citizens of Cape Charles.

RECAP OF ITEMS

Vice Mayor Bannon recapped the day’s discussions as follows: i) Frank Wendell will be forming a citizens’ group regarding the Cape Charles School; ii) The alternative energy presentation was fantastic and Tom Bonadeo will be adding this issue as an agenda item for the Planning Commission’s review regarding any revisions that may be needed for the zoning ordinance; iii) There is still some confusion regarding COIA; iv) Tom Bonadeo will be developing a list of equipment and costs involved with televising of the Town Council meetings; v) Regarding the Current Budgetary Needs, it is important to have

multi-year obligations spelled out similar, to the way Bridgewater has it; vi) The Council liked the Bridgewater information and will send their preferences to Paul Skolnick so he can prepare a draft report.

There was some discussion regarding Council members coming into the Town offices to get more information from staff regarding issues on the Town Council meeting agenda and it was agreed that the staff person would email all the Town Council members with a brief summary of their discussion in order for all the Council members to be aware of any additional information that may be available.

Motion made by Councilman Veber, seconded by Councilman Bennett and unanimously approved to adjourn the Town Council Retreat.

Vice Mayor Bannon

Town Clerk