

**POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING**

January 31, 2011

6:00 p.m.

County Complex, Building A

**1. Roll Call**

**Present**

Mr. Jack Fraley, Chair  
Mr. Tim O'Connor  
Mr. Al Woods  
Mr. Reese Peck

**Staff Present**

Mr. Allen Murphy  
Ms. Tammy Rosario  
Ms. Leanne Reidenbach  
Ms. Christy Parrish  
Ms. Kate Sipes  
Ms. Jennifer VanDyke

Mr. Jack Fraley called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**2. Minutes – December 13, 2010**

Mr. Woods moved to approve the minutes with amendments.

The minutes were approved (4-0).

**3. Old Business**

There was no old business to discuss.

**4. New Business – Cumulative Impacts of Development zoning ordinance updates**

Ms. Kate Sipes discussed the level of information that is currently used to gauge cumulative impacts. Different departments collect different pieces of data that is then used to project cumulative impacts. Each department uses a different software program making the process of compiling information a challenge. The information frequently requested is not easily withdrawn. Recognizing the complexity of this issue, this endeavor became an implementation item during the Comprehensive Plan update. Staff has since been evaluating options to find the most efficient way of capturing pertinent information to develop a more comprehensive understanding of cumulative impacts.

Ms. Christy Parrish discussed the process that the Planning division and the Real Estate division undergo during the creation of new lots. Applications are originally submitted with Planning, Real Estate creates new parcels, and eventually Codes Compliance will supply a building permit and a Certificate of Occupancy (CO) for those parcels being improved. Each division collects and tracks its own data using a different software. Planning uses CaseTrak, Real Estate uses Proval and Codes Compliance uses HMS.

Ms. Parrish stated while looking at different options available to staff, the one program that supplied the greatest amount of useful information was Geographic Information System (GIS). Staff

then looked at the information available for the purpose of accumulating data that could be used to better understand cumulative impacts. Examples of the information collected for the Jamestown District were provided. Staff created a body of information that represented an inventory of existing improved and vacant parcels. Information taken from GIS was then used to create pivot tables. Ms. Parrish reviewed the type of information that is made available using this method.

Mr. Fraley asked how much time is exhausted from when a subdivision is approved to when Real Estate creates a new lot.

Ms. Parrish stated once Planning has approved the subdivision, the developer can then record the plat. The land itself is assessed July 1 of the calendar year. There is a lag time. Supplemental bills are created for tax purposes if someone is building a house.

Mr. Reese Peck asked how often the database would be updated.

Ms. Parrish stated that eventually updating information should be relatively easy. Information will be collected using GIS, and GIS is kept current.

Mr. Woods asked if there are other localities using a software system that would make the process easier.

Ms. Parrish stated that staff had sent out a Request For Information (RFI) to find out. There were three responses. Staff sub sequentially interviewed one company that arrived at comparable information. This will be discussed later on.

Mr. Fraley asked if this information would then be used to populate a separate layer in GIS.

Ms. Parrish stated yes. The information is then re-uploaded onto GIS making it easy to access and manipulate.

Mr. Fraley stated he would be interested in receiving training on GIS and possibly there are other Planning Commissioners with the same interest.

Ms. Sipes stated this information serves the purpose of creating a comprehensive look at inventory. This can then be applied to better understand impacts on schools and water and sewer. Traffic impacts were thought to be the third and most critical application of the data, though traffic has the greatest number of variables making it the most complicated.

Mr. Woods asked what the school system uses to forecast their needs.

Ms. Parrish stated she is unfamiliar with their methods.

Mr. David Jarman, 117 Landsdown, stated that once a year they update their projections going out ten years. They use two components. One component is Survival Cohort Methodology. This takes the current student population and graduates each student to the next grade level for each year. Secondly, they attempt to project what the new household formations will be. New housing equates to more students. They use a formula for these projections. Finally, the data is used to

shift resources as needed. This function is not performed by the school system; it is done by an outside consultant. The consultant also maintains the database.

Mr. Woods stated that the information supplied would include impacts of new development.

Mr. Jarman stated they have their own methodology of projecting student populations.

Ms. Sipes stated that the Planning Division is contacted annually by Alan Robertson of Williamsburg-James City County Public Schools. This information is forwarded to the Planning Division from the consultant. They will also request information from the Planning Division regarding residential developments that have been approved. They attempt to track residential units that are still in the pipeline and not yet developed for forecasting purposes.

Mr. Jarman stated that their methodology is defined and provided with the database.

Mr. Woods stated efforts should not be duplicated.

Ms. Parrish stated that the school system could benefit from these efforts. Planning staff has been notified that this new collection of data could also be used by Fire and Police. This will not be duplicating the same data collection.

Ms. Leanne Reidenbach stated that this is part of the Board of Supervisors (BOS) adopted Adequate Public Facilities for Schools policy. The number of new housing units is applied to a formula to arrive at projected school-age children. Depending upon the housing unit type, apartment, townhouse, or single family dwelling, a different derivative is used.

Mr. Jarman stated that the weakness of the school division's methodology is projecting new household formations.

Ms. Reidenbach stated that staff is looking to the Policy Committee to direct development of this model. Ms. Reidenbach asked what kind of questions they want the cumulative impact model to answer.

Mr. Woods asked how the BOS prioritized this effort.

Mr. Fraley stated this is a high priority item, though expectations must be tempered by the amount money and time allocated to it. The BOS had discussed accumulating focused data, a set of data that could fit on "the back of an envelope".

Ms. Reidenbach stated staff wants to hear what sort of expectations the Policy Committee has for the cumulative impact data.

Mr. Peck stated so much of this data is relative to the spatial dimension of the development and the surrounding areas. Schools may be over-extended in one area and have abundant resources in another. When considering cumulative impacts one should consider the incremental cost that will be required to expand necessary facilities.

Mr. Woods stated it is important to ask what you want your community to look like, and what are the demands and issues associated with that vision.

Mr. Fraley stated one should ask what is the population going to look like. Developing a public facilities master plan would also forecast community needs driven by the cumulative impacts of new development. Mr. Fraley stated one should also consider what tax revenue base will be required to support these facilities.

Mr. Woods asked what has been the contributing discussion that led to this point.

Ms. Reidenbach stated that it stemmed from legislative and rezoning applications for new developments. These proposals include cumulative impact statements that speak to traffic, schools, water and sewer infrastructure needs. That analysis is based solely on what is on the ground.

Mr. Fraley stated that about five years ago he had written a paper on the need to revise methods for traffic studies. Traffic studies were eventually expanded to include corridor studies that assessed the cumulative impacts of those developments in the pipeline along with build-out potential based upon the parcel's zoning. Further discussions on cumulative impacts also occurred during the last Comprehensive Plan update. At that time Mr. Peck was vocal about the need for a public facilities master plan. Since then there had been the efforts of the James City County Concerned Citizens (J4C's) that centered on cumulative impacts.

Mr. Peck stated the need for cumulative impact studies naturally becomes a necessity for any growing community. James City County (JCC) citizens must also remain cognizant of the environmental concerns related to the close proximity of the Chesapeake Bay.

Ms. Rosario stated that there is data lost as staff conducts various analyses and modeling efforts that use development numbers, such as development potential analyses and traffic forecasting. This effort will eliminate the loss of such data. However, the question of where and when the pipeline development will occur, will remain unknown complicating the answers in public facility planning

Ms. Sipes spoke on the RFI. Staff was pleased to have three responses related to the RFI. Each of the three had a different approach. None of responses were creating the exact level of information staff had been tasked with. The one company that staff interviewed had achieved something that looked similar. The company completed a project for the State Department of Transportation in Delaware. The study only included traffic impacts. Ms. Sipes discussed the model created.

Ms. Rosario stated even before the RFI, staff had asked the Planner's Advisory Service to find other localities that may have done something similar. No other locality employs any method that compiles cumulative impact data in this way. There were examples of other localities that were tracking or creating an analysis of impacts, but not together.

Mr. Fraley stated that the ground-breaking nature of this effort is significant; the BOS should take this into consideration. During the Comprehensive Plan there was a traffic model used to identify choke points/potential problem areas.

Ms. Sipes stated that the first step in understanding cumulative impacts requires tracking development through the process. The tracked progression would start with the rezoning proposal, next the subdivision being recorded at the courthouse, next Real Estate getting it on the tax rolls, until finally the building permit or Certificate of Occupancy is issued. The goal is to develop a method of tracking developments through the system.

Ms. Reidenbach stated that staff will initially focus on residential developments. Residential development is easier to track and has the greatest impacts on the community.

Ms. Sipes stated that creating a better inventory and tracking system for residential development is something staff can accomplish. The next step, using the data to generate projected impacts is much more complicated. Staff needs to develop a method (with or without a consultant) of collecting data to extrapolate very specific impact projections. Even if money were unlimited, it is impossible to forecast unlimited conditions.

Mr. Tim O'Connor asked about the timing of development.

Ms. Reidenbach stated that this does not include a time horizon. It would only track the progress of the development through the system.

Mr. Fraley stated that even once a development is in the pipeline there will be "what if's".

Ms. Sipes stated that as a part of the semi-annual or annual reporting mechanism the progress of those developments can be monitored. Ms. Sipes stated staff is looking to find what type of information could be of assistance during the Planning Commission's review of legislative cases.

Ms. Reidenbach stated that staff is looking to hear what their priorities are regarding impacts.

Mr. Fraley stated he is uncertain of how this information relates to achieving the goal of a vision. Mr. Fraley stated in looking at question two, he sees certain items that may be easy to arrive at such as Police and Libraries, and others that would be very challenging.

Mr. Peck stated that there may be certain conditions that need to be more closely followed in a given area of interest.

Ms. Reidenbach stated that to construct the model staff needs to focus on a finite number of impacts. Once the database has been constructed and has been collecting data for a period of time there may be more information gleaned from the output. Getting to this stage will take time.

Mr. Peck stated, with that in mind it may be ideal to focus on traffic. Many other impacts would follow the same trend as traffic.

Mr. Fraley stated that traffic studies are already a required element with any development that expects to generate 100 or more weekday peak hour trips to and from the site during the peak hour of operation. Schools are very important and represent more than 50% of the budget. The environment is another impact of great importance.

Mr. Peck stated that schools are very important. Staff should look into what the school system uses to create their forecasts.

Mr. Jarman offered his own prioritized list for impacts: 1) schools, 2) water and sewer, 3) environmental impacts, and 4) transportation.

Mr. Fraley stated he sees transportation as a very detrimental impact for two reasons: quality of life and economic development of the community. The ability to recruit new businesses to JCC depends on the transportation system. The impacts on water and sewer are being considered independently by the Service Authority and the BOS.

Mr. Jarman stated that the methods employed by the Service Authority to measure impacts are lacking. They use historic data to calculate needs into the future; the method leaves a lot of room for error.

Mr. Peck stated that this is an important point especially if one is considering the challenges of sustainable development. The groundwater permitting system is flawed. The water plan has not been updated since 1997. The stormwater system is also past due.

Mr. Chuck Buell of 112 Killington stated that while constructing the model it is important to understand all the variables involved by developing "what if" questions. He does not see the model being capable of foreseeing all negative outcomes.

Ms. Rosario stated that this was greatly considered during the Comprehensive Plan update. There were several critical questions asked based upon potential growth patterns. Three different build-out scenarios were developed to better understand impacts. Based on zoning designation and/or Comprehensive Land Use designation staff had developed projections for several undeveloped parcels.

Mr. Buell stated that thresholds need to be developed.

Mr. Fraley stated that this brings to mind the consequences of having inconsistencies between the zoning and the Comprehensive Land Use designation. Mr. Fraley stated that staff should work with Larry Foster to find out more about the water and sewer impacts.

Ms. Sipes stated that staff has been working with Mr. Foster, and they will continue to do so.

Mr. Jarman stated that while working with the J4C's, Mr. Foster discussed his efforts in looking at surface water alternatives.

Mr. Woods stated that he does not see water and sewer as the fourth item in the list of priorities; it needs to be higher. Transportation has to be at the top since economic viability is dependent upon it.

Ms. Reidenbach stated that staff is also looking to get feedback regarding the frequency of the data updates.

Mr. Fraley stated that it could be updated annually as a part of the annual Planning Commission Report.

Mr. Woods asked what frequency staff was proposing.

Ms. Reidenbach stated that Planning Commissioners may see an advantage in having the most up-to-date information available when considering rezoning proposals under legislative review. Though recognizing the amount of staff time that would be exhausted providing these updates, it may not be realistic.

Ms. Parrish stated that doing it on an annual basis means that updates can be provided directly after Real Estate posts their annual updates.

Ms. Reidenbach stated that staff is looking to hear the preferred format for presentation, i.e. spreadsheet or graphics.

Mr. Fraley suggested a combination of the two.

Ms. Reidenbach asked, based upon the elements highlighted in the Cumulative Impact Modeling memorandum dated January 31, 2011, are there other items that should be included for further consideration.

Mr. Woods stated he is concerned with setting realistic expectations. He is not certain that the goals set forth are attainable.

Mr. Allen Murphy stated that this has not been done previously; staff will be breaking new ground.

Mr. Woods stated it is important to realize what they are risking by exhausting staff's time and energy on this endeavor.

Mr. Murphy stated that this needs to be considered a long-term planning vision.

Mr. Woods stated that staff needs to hear fully what people are expecting with this. Mr. Woods asked how staff is going to facilitate this discussion with the BOS. There may be unintended consequences if people have unspoken expectations regarding the outcome of the model.

Ms. Reidenbach stated that the work thus far, creating the data for one district had several purposes. One being a measure of how much time is exhausted collecting and applying this data. Staff was pleased to see that the information can be loaded into GIS, this will save time in the long run. If an outside consultant were to be used the project would be very costly.

Ms. Parrish stated that even if the County were to use an outside consultant the steps that staff proposes here would be necessary. Going through this process is inevitable. Once staff has refined the process the other districts should be completed fairly quickly.

Mr. Peck stated that you cannot avoid the need for objective view points. There is no tool available that will foresee all possible impacts of development. This tool should provide the most

up-to-date information to give a foundation for further analysis. People need to remain cognizant that the information has limitations.

Mr. Buell asked what the schedule for this project is.

Mr. Fraley stated that this has been identified as a high-priority item. This will be reviewed by the BOS in February.

Mr. Jarman stated that the J4C's could assist staff by providing and discussing the data collection and analysis they under went to create their own cumulative impact studies. Of the stages outlined by staff the J4C's had looked at stages 1, 2, 6 and portions of 5. The first stage is the most important as well as the easiest.

Mr. Fraley stated that he would like staff to utilize the resources in the community.

Ms. Parrish stated that staff intends to create a database that will be fairly easy to update.

Mr. Jarman stated that their efforts included one other piece of data not seen here; they identified traffic corridors for each parcel.

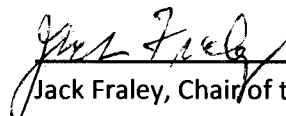
Ms. Reidenbach stated that staff has considered labeling corridors, though it becomes complicated for some areas that feed into multiple corridors.

Mr. Fraley asked staff several questions related to the upcoming meeting schedule.

## **5. Adjournment**

Mr. Peck moved to adjourn.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

  
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Jack Fraley, Chair of the Policy Committee