

POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

March 20, 2012

4:00 p.m.

County Complex, Building A

1) Roll Call

Present

Mr. Rich Krapf
Mr. Tim O'Connor
Mr. Mike Maddocks

Staff Present

Mr. Allen Murphy
Ms. Tammy Rosario
Ms. Ellen Cook
Mr. Brian Elmore

Absent

Mr. Al Woods

Mr. Rich Krapf called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

2) New Business - Preparation for Upcoming Joint Planning Commission Meeting

Mr. Krapf stated the purpose of today's meeting was to support the coordinated regional Comprehensive Plan review process and to recommend discussion topics and issues of concern to the full Planning Commission in preparation for the April 30th joint Commission meeting.

Ms. Ellen Cook stated that as part of the regional Comprehensive Plan review, four community forums have been held, and reference materials and a website have been produced. She stated staff identified four focus areas, with related reference materials on the website: economics, housing, transportation, and demographics/public facilities. Staff is also working to produce inter-locality land use maps, to show regional land uses. There is an online questionnaire in addition to the forum responses on the website.

Ms. Tammy Rosario stated that in addition to the forums, people can email, phone, or write a letter.

Mr. Krapf stated he noticed in a number of citizen comments concern about the Historic Triangle's aging demographics, including the need for additional assisted living alternatives. He stated other citizens commented on school facility needs and opportunities.

Mr. Tim O'Connor stated that transportation discussions should focus on transportation realities, instead of discussing commuter rail that will not exist until far into the future. He stated the Board is discussing density bonuses for developments that include a Williamsburg Area Transportation Authority stop.

Mr. Krapf stated Mr. Basic had suggested discussing I-64's emergency evacuation capacity. The committee discussed regional emergency management coordination.

Mr. O'Connor stated that considering how Williamsburg, York, and James City connect, it is important to discuss matching landscape buffers to preserve community character corridors and rural areas.

Ms. Rosario stated that preservation of citizens' property rights was another common theme at the discussion forums, including concern about the reach of any regional entity.

Mr. Krapf stated the localities may establish a list of common issues and possibly goals, but the Comprehensive Plans are developed independently within each jurisdiction.

Mr. Krapf stated the various jurisdictions' diversity of revenue streams was one of his personal concerns. He stated a Lightfoot/Pottery economic opportunity zone may provide economic opportunities that are not as susceptible to swings in the local economy.

Ms. Rosario began writing possible discussion topics on the board.

Mr. Mike Maddocks stated part of the reason for the area's older demographics is a lack of jobs for college graduates.

Mr. Krapf stated the percentage of local jobs in the hospitality industries is significantly higher than the state average. He stated these jobs represented 18.4% of Historic Triangle jobs versus the state's 8.4% average. These tourist industries were significantly impacted by the recession.

Ms. Cook showed the Committee a map of James City and York economic opportunity zones.

Mr. Krapf asked if there was a way to make comparison between the economic zones clearer on the map.

Ms. Cook stated that the generalized land use designation categories that were used for the regional map included commercial and mixed use, but not economic opportunity. Each locality was responsible for putting their land into the general category they thought was the best fit – York chose to categorize their economic opportunity-designated land as commercial, while James City chose to categorize their economic opportunity-designated land as mixed use. She stated that staff should continue to work on the maps and could perhaps add a separate economic opportunity category to the regional map.

Mr. O'Connor asked about York's vision for the Lightfoot corridor.

Ms. Cook stated York's Comprehensive Plan in Lightfoot is weighted towards commercial use, with potential mixed use.

Mr. O'Connor stated the localities should attempt to marry up uses.

Mr. Allen Murphy stated transportation would be key. He stated future development in the Lightfoot area is dependent on a new road running between Route 199 and Croaker to I-64.

Mr. Maddocks stated the localities could match bike lanes and sidewalks.

Mr. Krapf asked if there had been discussions to include Colonial Towne Plaza and its neighboring parcels south of Richmond Road in the economic opportunity zone.

Mr. Murphy stated there was a Comprehensive Plan map amendment that addressed the possible expansion of the commercial area to incorporate a larger user. He stated the area is ripe for redevelopment.

Mr. O'Connor asked if there was a way to promote regional agriculture and commercial fishing for economic development and to preserve rural areas.

Mr. Krapf asked what staff saw as common discussion items for housing, such as the city's student rental population, and its bearing on the County, or affordability.

Ms. Rosario stated the affordability issue covers all three jurisdictions. She stated student housing is mainly concentrated in the city.

Mr. Krapf asked if affordable and workforce housing could be measured between the three localities.

Mr. Murphy stated the localities can compare housing, although there may be some apples and oranges comparisons.

Mr. Krapf stated in order to have any discussions, it is important for the localities to identify how they measure or define topics. He stated even something as simple as zoning districts are difficult to compare. These differences may make it difficult to have a productive meeting.

Mr. Krapf stated a locality's vision for an area can affect its neighbors. He stated regional conflicts or chokepoints related to the Marquis and Riverside developments should be addressed.

Mr. Murphy stated future traffic projections include diminished Route 199 levels of service. He stated these projections presume development around the Marquis and Riverside.

Mr. O'Connor stated it may be worth discussing future impacts of growth north of I-64, especially road capacity, on the Lightfoot corridor.

Mr. Krapf asked staff to circulate the meeting's comments and minutes to the whole Committee, if possible, before the Committee makes its recommendations to the Commission.

3) Public Comment

Ms. Landra Skelley stated she was concerned with loss of rural character and agriculture.

Mr. Leslie Skelley stated he was concerned about the loss of small farms and farmers' rights.

Mr. Krapf stated the number of area restaurants may create agribusiness opportunities. He stated promoting agribusiness is one of the Comprehensive Plan's goals. Farmers want to be able to leave nest eggs to their families, even if that means putting the land into development. Many farmers would want to continue farming if there were economic incentives.

Mr. Skelley stated he was also concerned with the government over-regulating farms.

Mr. Krapf stated there are a variety of resources for county farmers to retain agricultural and forested land, including the purchase of development rights program and agricultural easements.

Mr. Skelley asked about creating a County property rights advocate position.

Mr. Keith Sadler stated he was opposed to common pages in the Comprehensive Plans that could result in additional bureaucracy. He stated he was concerned about consensus meetings giving the public the perception that they had more input than they actually had, government land use control affecting supply and demand, and use of tax money for bike trails.

The Committee discussed its list of joint meeting discussion topics.

Mr. Krapf recommended the Commission discuss the priority topics of Economic Opportunity areas, housing and affordability standards, the Kingsmill/Riverside/Marquis corridor, agriculture/farmland promotion, overall Comprehensive Plan priority issues, and future transportation services at the joint Planning Commission meeting.

4) Adjournment

Mr. Maddocks moved to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 5:35 p.m.


Rich Krapf, Chair of the Policy Committee