

**PASQUOTANK COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA
MARCH 24, 2022**

The Pasquotank County Board of Commissioners met today in a special meeting with the Pasquotank County Planning Board on Thursday, March 24, 2022 at 4:00 PM in the Community Room at the Pasquotank County Public Safety Building.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Charles Jordan, Vice- Chairman
Cecil Perry
Barry Overman
Sean Lavin

MEMBERS ABSENT: Lloyd E. Griffin, III
William “Bill” Sterritt
Jonathan Meads

OTHERS PRESENT: Sparty Hammett, County Manager
R. Michael Cox, County Attorney
Lynn Scott, Clerk to the Board

Also present were members of the Pasquotank County Planning Board. The meeting was called to order at 4:00 PM by Vice-Chairman Charles Jordan.

Jay McLeod of Stewart, LLC explained that they are here today to kick off the CAMA Land Use Plan update process that they will be going through over the next many months. He said at the end of the meeting he wants to save time for ideas and discussion about issues and opportunities facing the County in the next five to ten years so they can make sure they address those issues as they move forward in the planning process.

Mr. McLeod stated that he met with several individuals this morning to include: Utilities, Parks and Recreation, Planning, GIS, Airport, Fire, EMS, DOT, County Planning Director, City Planning Director and Stormwater. He said he received a great introduction into the issues and recent successes, and what they see “hot” in the next five years. Following the meeting, they went on a tour of the County. He said this meeting is a follow up to that. They want the Boards’ perspective. They will take the information back and start building the information that frames out the foundation of the shared information that they build the plan from. From that, they will have some public engagement, start building the plan recommendations, and the future land use plan, and bring it back to the board and county staff.

Mr. McLeod provided a history of Stewart, LLC.

Mr. McLeod explained that there are a lot of components that lead into a land use plan update, such as 160-D, which is the recent state government realignment of the planning legislation in the state. Now, we need to have relatively current land use plans in order to enact and enforce zoning. By going through a visioning process, and establishing existing conditions, and having a future land use map, the County will be able to continue to enact zoning in a way that is compliant with those requirements.

Mr. McLeod said since Pasquotank is a coastal community we have to deal with the Coastal Area Management Act. CAMA is interested in the five topics: public access to public trust water, land use compatibility, infrastructure, natural hazards, and water quality.

Mr. McLeod provided a timeline for the project. After adoption by the Planning Board and Board of Commissioners, it will go to the Coastal Resources Commission for their review. He anticipates getting to this point by the spring of next year. Today is the kickoff event, with the community tour and the stakeholder interviews. They will be gathering information the next couple of months. A survey will be released for the public. They wanted to meet today before they finalize the surveys so they have a really good idea what is going on. They will be building the community profile (existing conditions and background analysis that forms the foundation of the project). After they finish the survey, they will start working on visions and goals

development. There will be a steering committee meeting during that period as well. They will draft the plan. After which, a public meeting will be held and revisions will be made. Lastly, the Planning Board and Board of Commissioners will consider adoption.

Andrea Radford provided a PowerPoint presentation on data taken from the 2020 census, which will be utilized for the plan.

Planning Director Shelley Cox stated that the number of building permits for single family residential have increased tremendously recently. Whether it will stay that way, no one knows. There are a lot of houses that were started that are now sitting because they are waiting on products. She said there are definitely supply chain issues.

Mr. McLeod noted that their tour was very informative. They were able to learn a lot about the county and where growth is taking place. Ms. Cox stated that they also discussed the challenge the County is having with roads which have not been taken over by the state for maintenance because of their conditions.

Attorney Cox said around the time of 2000 to 2008 the Board wanted to focus development between Main Street Extended and US 17. It was called the Golden Triangle at the time. The philosophy was to keep growth out of Weeksville and Newland, and encourage it in the center part of the County, which would be closer to EMS and fire.

Mr. McLeod said the next steps are continuing to draft the survey, while working with staff to get the language right. They hope to get as much input from the community as possible. They are counting on the County to spread the word out to stakeholders and citizens. The main focus will be about peoples' goals and values, and how much progress they believe we have made in executing the existing plan, places we need to keep working, places where we have done enough, and what their priorities are for the County moving forward. He said from his end, they will be doing an assessment of existing planning efforts, more mapping analysis, community profile, working on the environmental information, and following up on the information and questions they receive today.

Mr. McLeod opened the floor for discussion. He said he would like to hear what the Boards see as the biggest issues and opportunities.

Attorney Cox said Future I-87 definitely needs to be taken into consideration (widening of US 17 and US 158).

Mr. Brown said economic development and good paying jobs is very important to him, with the focus being on technology. Mr. McLeod asked if the County has infrastructure in place. County Manager Hammett noted that the County is looking at using ARP funds to leverage other state and federal grants to expand broadband throughout the County. Attorney Cox added that we have the water, but the City has a sewer plant that is at capacity.

Mr. Lavin said he feels that they will find a consensus that most folks are bullish on future investment and growth. He said it is up to us to capture it and manage it as best as we can. He added that they are trying to address community safety in the Newland area currently, with how congestion is impacting the area. He stated that he is a little partial to the manufacturing sector. He thinks there is a lot of potential for advanced manufacturing, whether its electronics specific to the aviation industry or other government contracts. A couple of large government contracts are coming down from the Norfolk Area to neighboring counties. These types of jobs will allow younger people to have higher paying jobs.

Attorney Cox said we may need to look at future water access and future subdivisions. He noted that if the County goes against its land use plan they have to have good reasons why. Ms. Cox said that's why it's important this is a good vision for where you want to see growth and where you don't want to see growth. She said the last land use plan the County adopted in 2012 focused growth in the golden triangle of the County, which is basically the Main Street corridor area and it said we can also consider waterfront development in other sections of the County, which are primarily Weeksville. She stated that if you drive around the County that is where you are seeing it.

Mr. Phippen stated that with the hospital moving to Halstead Extended and all the new businesses in that area, he feels we are going to see more and more growth in that area and towards the north. He noted that a lot of people have moved into his neighborhood from Virginia that commute back and forth because they don't want to live in Chesapeake.

Vice-Chairman Jordan noted that a lot of people are moving to the northern part of Camden County, which we are closely connected to. Ms. Cox said if you look at what's happening in Camden County, in South Mills along Highway 17, there are some significant developments coming down. US 17 is the corridor that is feeding all these developments. She thinks that will continue into Newland.

Commissioner Overman stated that the area out by Walmart would probably be built out more than it is now, but the City established a whole new set of rules for the Halstead corridor, because they wanted it to look like Williamsburg. There was a motorcycle store that wanted to locate out there, but they could not have anything out front for sale. Building codes sometimes prevent us from opportunities. In some areas, we can't serve businesses with water, internet, or even cable TV. He mentioned a church that was almost not built because of a sprinkler system that was required. On Impact Boulevard, a building supply company had to put in thousands and thousands of dollars for a water tank just so their sprinkler system would work. He is surprised that they built there because of the cost. He added, if we had broadband throughout the County, we would have more people building houses and working from home. COVID has become more of an economic driver than we even realize. Employees no longer have to go to offices, so broadband is more important than we realize.

Mr. McLeod explained the importance of focusing on existing infrastructure, fire suppression, schools, etc. He said he doesn't know if the County has ever done a Cost of Service Study at the County level, but there are firms and universities that will examine the expenditures of the County and what they go to, who uses them, and how property tax revenues are generated and how much of the property tax revenue pays for certain services. They usually split it up in two or three buckets (residential, industrial/commercial, and agriculture). They look at all the counties expenditures and determine how much each category consumes. Generally speaking, what they find is that agriculture actually pays more taxes than it uses, because farmland does not make students or need emergency services or public health. In the same token, industrial and nonresidential commercial don't really use those either. Generally speaking, those land uses provide three or four times as much money to the County. He said he is not saying that residential is good or bad, but schools, social services, and healthcare are expensive. There is a balance to be had there.

Mr. Brown said we need jobs that will retain young people. As the numbers indicate, young people are moving out and older people are moving in. He would like to see a technology firm locate here.

Commissioner Overman said if you talk to graduating high schoolers or college kids, they are not looking for a career; they are looking for a job, because they don't plan on staying here more than three years. They will go to the competitor after that. It's a different outlook than it was years ago when people were looking for something they could retire at. Retirement is a thing of the past. He stated that the Board often talks about how they can be competitive in order to keep their employees here.

Mr. McLeod said they also discussed sea level rise in the communities in the Weeksville area. The river was pretty high when they were doing their drive around. He asked for thoughts on how that affects the county moving forward. He asked if storms shut down the area.

Commissioner Lavin stated that flooding is definitely a concern after any event.

Vice-Chairman Jordan stated that the County has a drainage committee that is working on various areas in the County to try and improve drainage. He said so much has happened over the years and they have found that they are not going to be able to fix every problem, but they are trying to at least make them better.

Commissioner Overman said as we get an influx of people moving into our area, typically they come from areas that are not flat. We cannot move water here by gravity. It takes time to

recede. He said flooding is in the eye of the beholder. He said the same thing happens with questions such as “why do you burn wheat fields” and “why do you spray your crops with an airplane”. He said we never had these problems before because everybody grew up here and they expected these things. Getting past that is interesting.

There was discussion regarding NCDOT not cleaning the ditches like they did in the past and the City’s failing infrastructure.

Commissioner Perry suggested looking at ten acre lots and how they affect development. Ms. Cox noted that is a problem that they are seeing now in Newland. Developers are buying up farmland in Newland and dividing it up into ten acre lots. One of her building inspectors almost got stuck yesterday trying to inspect a house off of Brother’s Lane. The fire marshal is concerned about getting a firetruck down the lane.

Mr. McLeod thanked the Boards for participating. He said they have received a lot of good information to be utilized.

The meeting adjourned at 5:11 PM.

CHAIRMAN

CLERK TO THE BOARD