

Regional Update

A Monthly Report of Activities on the Eastern Shore of Virginia

March 2004

Wastewater System for Downtown Parksley

Parksley businesses have been experiencing problems with their septic systems for some time. In fact, failing septic tanks in the downtown district, and Virginia Department of Health regulations which prohibit replacing the tanks without installing a completely new system, resulted in businesses having to close when septic tanks malfunctioned. As a result, in spring of 2003, the Town Council contracted with the engineering firm of Wiley & Wilson to prepare a preliminary engineering report that would include a needs study.

The Wiley & Wilson report was broken out by sections of town and proposed options for sewage treatment and disposal methods. One option, which the Town Council determined was affordable and would address the most pressing problem in the shortest time, was to install a sewage collection system in the commercial business dis-

trict to include all the businesses in the commercial district including Dunne Avenue and Bennett Street, as well as the shirt factory and the Lunch Box restaurant on Cassatt Avenue.

In June of 2003, the Parksley Town Council voted to install a sewer collection system in the commercial business district. During the summer, the town explored funding options to construct the system and learned that the US Department of Agriculture Rural Development Division could grant 75% of the

cost of installing the sewer system, and the town can borrow the balance from USDA at a very competitive rate. Mayor Tom Young also explored the use of other grants for the 25% balance. However, in order to move forward, an application to USDA for a grant/loan combination in the amount \$ 853,000 was prepared by Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission staff in January 2004 and work continues to develop additional documents as requested by USDA for funding approval, which should be decided no later than June.

In February, Parksley entered into an engineering services agreement with Wiley & Wilson to design the system and prepare the required environmental documents. The next steps for Wiley & Wilson are to prepare the environmental report and conduct a soil study of the area proposed for the mass drain field.



The railroad station is one of the attractions in downtown Parksley

Public Service Authority Update

The Eastern Shore Public Service Authority (ESVPSA) is now off and running. Several projects are being considered. One such is the possible inclusion of the NASA Wallops Flight Facility's sewage and water infrastructure under the Authority's umbrella. Such a public partnership could allow private interests to take advantage (for a fee) of the underused capacity of the existing sewage and water systems and relieve NASA from the mundane task of running a water and sewage operation. This would also give the Authority a firm foundation on which to build for the future.

Also on the horizon is the potential for major sewage treatment plants to serve central Accomack County and northern Northampton County. Potential sites for such plants are in the process of being identified. In the case of

the Northampton County system, a purchase option for property is being considered.

The most urgent item on the Authority's agenda is the acceptance of the Bayview sewage and water systems. Minor problems are being attended to by the various contractors. Once these are completed to the satisfaction of the Health Department and other regulatory agencies, the Authority will take over the operation, maintenance and billing for both systems.

There has been much interest from other outside entities in what the Authority may eventually be able to do. Small sewage treatment plant operators have expressed interest as well as some Towns. As the Authority gears up its operations, it is hoped that it will be able to serve all who wish to be served.

Loans for First-Time Homeowners

The Accomack-Northampton Housing and Redevelopment Corporation is currently accepting applications for potential first-time homeowners through the Single Family Regional Loan Fund. The loan fund provides below-market-rate mortgage loans to lower-income, first-time homebuyers for the purchase of their primary residence. The acquisition of new and existing single-family homes is eligible.

Funding is made available and intended to provide mortgages to those households that cannot financially qualify for other mortgage products. First mortgage monies at 4.125% interest are made available for first-time homebuyers that can credit qualify for VHDA financing.

Loans will be fixed-rate and fixed payment for the amortization period of 30 years. HOME Partnership Investment Funds will be provide down payment and closing cost assistance and may be deferred, forgive, and/or amortized as deemed appropriate. Applicants must possess an employment/income history that demonstrates stable income sufficient to repay the proposed debt.

The Accomack-Northampton Housing and Redevelopment Corporation has been awarded \$350,000 in mortgage loans for low income families (60% of the area median family income) and \$34,000 HOME funding.

All persons interested in obtaining an application should contact Bobbie Jo Wert, SFRLF Local Administrator at 787-2800 or toll free 866-787-3001.

Downtowns to take a Closer Look

As part of the Regional Downtown Revitalization Program, the towns of Cape Charles, Exmore, Onancock, Parksley and Chincoteague will host public meetings March 16th, 17th and 18th to take a close look at their downtown commercial districts. The meetings will be facilitated by staff from the Virginia Department of Housing & Community Development's Office of Community Capacity Building and will focus on developing a direction for downtown development and steps to implement it.

Each town will also look at their downtown areas with an eye for developing a project that could potentially be funded by Community Development Block Grant funds to promote economic vitality.

If you are interested in attending, please call Greg Manter, Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission Director of Economic Development, at 787-1247 (or toll-free 866-787-3001) for dates and times of individual meetings.

FY05 Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program Annual Plan Comment Period

The Accomack-Northampton Regional Housing Authority is soliciting comment on its Fiscal Year 2005 Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program Annual Plan. This plan outlines the agency's goals, objectives and policies governing its rental assistance program for the twelve months beginning July 2004.

Copies of the draft Annual Plan are available at the Accomack-Northampton Regional Housing Authority and Northampton County administrative

offices for a 45-day public comment period. A public hearing on the Plan will be held April 19, 2003 at 7 pm at the offices of the Accomack-Northampton Regional Housing Authority. Please call 757-787-2800 or toll free 866-787-3001 for additional information.

Please send comments to: Kat Edwards, Director of Housing Production, Accomack-Northampton Regional Housing Authority, PO Box 387, Accomac, VA 23301.



How to Contact the A-NPDC

If you have questions or comments about anything in this publication, please don't hesitate to contact the Planning District Commission.

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