

Regional Update

A Monthly Report of Activities on the Eastern Shore of Virginia

April 2004

Town Meetings Set Priorities for the Future

Cape Charles, Exmore, Onancock, Parksley and Chincoteague held town meetings in March to prioritize projects for the revitalization. The meetings were part of the Regional Downtown Revitalization Program run by citizens groups in each town and staffed by the Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission. Representatives of the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development facilitated the meetings and there was excellent participation, including a high of 56 attendees in Parksley.

The results of the meetings give direction to revitalization efforts in each town. Work will begin immediately to plan for the implementation of the highest priority projects. Implementation funding is available from the Department of Housing and Community Development and other funding agencies. Final decisions on any applications will be made by the citizens' groups and Town Councils in the towns.

Onancock met on the evening of March 15th at the Town Hall. The top priority town project is the improvement of the streetscape and street lamps. An upgrade of the wastewater treatment plant, a visitor center at the wharf, and planning the reuse of the Learning Center were the next highest priorities. A

regional hiking and biking trail drew the most interest as a regional project.

Cape Charles met at 1 PM on March 16th. The overwhelming favorite town project is improvement of the harbor area, possibly including an interpretive center for the meteor impact crater and waterfront property redevelopment. Also generating support were enhanced public utilities (water and sewer), uniform streetscape improvements, and a focus on affordable housing. The regional project of most interest

in Cape Charles is a ferry and excursion train.

Chincoteague met at 6:30 PM on the 16th. A model shared septic system for the downtown was made the highest priority. Moving power and phone lines was second priority. Hiring a strategic planner was the third choice. The most popular regional project idea was a bike tour of the Eastern Shore.

Parksley met on the evening of the 17th at the Parksley Fire Station. The development of a railroad-themed marketplace was the highest priority town project, but it was followed closely by beautification of the town and storefronts. Development of a community center was the third priority. An excursion train was the most popular regional project idea.

Exmore met at 6:30 PM on the 18th at the Exmore Town Hall. The extension of the downtown revitalization district north and south is the top priority project in Exmore. Other projects, by order of priority, are to relocate old buildings to town to fill empty lots, build a farmers/festival market, expand the town sewer system, clean up the Delany property for a business park, and finish the parking lot improvements. The most popular regional project idea was an excursion train.



Streetscape improvements underway in downtown Exmore

Seaside Water Trail Plan Presentations Scheduled

Presentations on the Seaside Water Trail Plan will be held in Accomack County, Northampton County, and Chincoteague during April 2004. The Seaside Water Trail Plan identifies canoe and kayak paddling routes on the Seaside of Virginia's Eastern Shore, and recommends needs for canoe and kayak launch site improvements.

The presentations are being held by the A-NPDC in cooperation with Accomack County, Northampton County, the Town of Chincoteague, and Virginia's Coastal Program.

The Accomack Seaside Water Trail Plan Presentation will be held at 7:00 PM on Thursday, April 15, at the A-NPDC office in Accomac. The Chincoteague workshop will be held at 7:00 PM on Tuesday, April 20, at the Chincoteague Municipal Building. The Northampton Water Trail Planning Workshop will be held at 7:00 PM on Wednesday, April 28, at the Northampton County Courthouse, Eastville.

For more information about the Seaside Water Trail Plan, contact Jim McGowan, A-NPDC Director of Planning, at 757-787-2936.

Regional Housing Plan Public Hearing

A regional public hearing to solicit comments on the aforementioned regional strategic plan pursuant to Section 15.2-4209 of the Code of Virginia will be held on Monday, April 19, 2004 at 6:00 p.m. in the Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission (A-NPDC) Conference Room, The Enterprise Building, 23372 Front Street, Accomac, Virginia.

The Regional Housing Assessment and Strategic Plan identifies critical housing needs of the Eastern Shore of Virginia region and recommends six projects to be completed in the next 5 years to address the identified needs.

Copies of the Assessment and Plan are available for public examination during normal business hours at the following locations:

- A-NPDC Offices, The Enterprise Building, 23372 Front St., Accomac, Virginia
- Eastern Shore Public Library, 23610 Front St., Accomac, Virginia
- Island Library, 4077 Main Street, Chincoteague, Virginia
- Northampton Free Library, 7401 Railroad St., Nassawadox, Virginia
- Northampton Memorial Library, Tazewell & Plum Sts., Cape Charles, Virginia

The public is invited to attend the public hearing. For handicap assistance, please call (757) 787-2936.

Regional Partnership: New Faces

The Eastern Shore of Virginia Regional Partnership has several new members and is moving ahead on a group of economic development projects for our region.

Laura Belle Gordy replaced Greg Duncan as the Accomack Board of Supervisors' representative and Larry Trala replaced Suzanne Wescoat for Northampton County. Former Delegate Bob Bloxom remains a member of the Partnership, and Delegate Lynwood Lewis has now joined the group. In fact, Lewis gave an update on the budget impasse in Richmond at the meeting on March 22.

New Partnership members from the business community are Ken Holt (Charter Communications), Andrea Mason (Walter & Walton's Emporium), Oral Lambert (Bay Creek Marina Villages), Gene Erb (Shore Health Ser-

vices), and Jeff Hammer (waterman and drywall contractor).

The Regional Partnership is pursuing economic development projects for the Shore, despite losing all funding from the state. The Academical Village task force is identifying teachers to guide the development of the project. The goal of the project is to help our school systems recruit teachers by offering them a quality place to live. The Broadband Initiative had Virginia Tech identify demand for broadband Internet access. The Heritage Trail task force has selected the sites and routes for the Trail, and will finish a website for the by July. The Regional Downtown Revitalization Program is improving and promoting the business environment in Chincoteague, Parksley, Onancock, Exmore and Cape Charles.

Paper on CBBT Toll Study Published

A paper written by Paul Berge (executive director of the A-NPDC) and Albert Racciatti (principal planner, Louis Berger Group) was published in *Transportation Research Record* number 1859.

The paper is titled "Evaluating Indirect Land Use and Environmental Effects of a Toll Discount Proposal." It explains how an impact study was done of a proposed toll discount on the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel.

The impact study has also been recognized with an American Planning Association Virginia chapter award and conference presentations.

Hazard Mitigation Committee Update

The Eastern Shore Hazard Mitigation Committee met in February and March and identified four major hazards affecting the Eastern Shore: high winds, coastal erosion, storm water flooding and coastal flooding. These hazards are the focus of the Eastern Shore Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment. One portion of the assessment will identify areas where existing homes, businesses and government buildings are vulnerable to disaster damage. In the future, the committee will use the risk assessment to formulate a Hazard Mitigation Strategy to prevent or reduce disaster damage in Accomack and Northampton.



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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