

TAPPAHANNOCK PLANNING COMMISSION
AUGUST 2, 2023
7:00 P.M.

Present

Chair:	Timothy Bradshaw
Vice Chair:	Dianna Carneal
Commission Members:	Maria Pitts (<i>arrived late</i>)
	Elaine Hilowitz
	Yvonne Vaughan
Community Development/Zoning Administrator:	Connie Dalton
Secretary:	Patsy K. Scates

Absent

Commission Member:	Scott Cannady
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Chair Bradshaw called the meeting to order.

On motion of Dianna Carneal, seconded by Elaine Hilowitz, the Commission voted to approve the July 5, 2023, Planning Commission Meeting Minutes.

Votes were cast as follows:

Dianna Carneal:	Aye	Timothy Bradshaw:	Aye
Elaine Hilowitz:	Aye	Yvonne Vaughan:	Abstain

OLD BUSINESS:

- **Traffic Calming Measures**

Chair Bradshaw stated that traffic calming measures are the first item for discussion.

Commission Member Hilowitz stated that she is not sure that traffic calming measures would be something that the Commission members would have control over.

Commission Member Carneal stated that she feels the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) would have control over that issue.

Chair Bradshaw suggested that the Commission members could contact the representatives from VDOT as citizens.

Commission Member Vaughan stated that she asked for the item to be on the agenda because it is an issue. She reminded the members that there was a presentation from the Tappahannock Police Department and she feels that if an issue is continuously brought up then there needs to be closure.

Commission Member Hilowitz stated that she feels that it should be noted that this is not an issue that the Commission members have any control over and that the Town Council is aware of the issue.

After some discussion, the Planning Commission members decided that the traffic calming measures issue was closed and if needed it would be brought back to the table to be discussed again later.

Connie Dalton suggested that the Commission Members review the streets that the council members asked them to look at and prepare a report with bullet points to identify the problems and recommendations if any. She suggested that if the comprehensive plan is reviewed more in depth in the future, then some policies could be incorporated into the plan to address the traffic concerns.

Connie Dalton stated that it was up to the commission members on how they want to proceed with this issue, but if they think this is as far as they can get then close it out but if not, she suggested to research it more.

Chair Bradshaw suggested contacting a representative of Tappahannock Main Street to see if they had any traffic information.

Commissioner Vaughan suggested utilizing the newsletter and inserting a survey to those citizens that reside on the streets that the council members asked them to review regarding the traffic issues.

Commissioner Hilowitz stated that she feels the traffic issues impact all the citizens in the town so she feels that everyone should be sent a survey.

Connie Dalton suggested putting a link in the newsletter regarding the survey and putting some surveys in the office. She suggested the commission members should decide what specific and concrete questions would be asked and how that information would be used first.

After some discussion it was decided that the commission members would send all survey questions to Commission Member Carneal and she would work on compiling the survey and have it ready for discussion at the September 6, 2023, planning commission meeting.

Chair Bradshaw stated that this traffic calming measures issue will be tabled until more information has been collected.

- **Updates**

Chair Bradshaw recognized Connie Dalton.

Connie Dalton gave the commission members a picture of murals that could possibly be painted on the Perdue Grain Silos that were presented to the Council member that they had requested to see.

Commission Member Carneal asked what the status of the draft mural document was.

Connie Dalton reported that she is working on the draft of the mural document, and will hopefully have a draft by the September 6, 2023, Planning Commission meeting.

Connie Dalton mentioned that October is National Community Planners/American Institute of American planners' month and they encourage communities and planners to find a way to celebrate planning or adopt a proclamation. See the following:

October is designated as National Community Planning Month (NCPM) by the American Planning Association (APA) and its professional institute, the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP). This is an opportunity to highlight the contributions of sound planning and plan implementation to enhance the quality of the community and environment.

If the Commission would like to move forward and recognize October as NCPM here is a short list to begin the discussion regarding opportunities to celebrate planning and/or educate the community during the month of October.

- ✦ Create a resolution for the Planning Commission to Proclaim October as NCPM
- ✦ Honor elected and appointed Officials and Commissioners during a Town Council meeting.
- ✦ Use social media and/or the newsletter to promote October as NCPM
- ✦ Showcase planning books at the local library.
- ✦ Create a reading list of planning books.
- ✦ Sponsor a community photo contest highlighting residents' favorite spots.
- ✦ Invite a planning guest speaker to a Planning Commission meeting.
- ✦ Set up a booth at the October 21, 2023, Farmer's Market.

This is not intended to be a comprehensive list of ideas, but rather a conversation starter for the Commission.

Here is a sample of a proclamation that could be utilized.

COMMUNITY PLANNING MONTH

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, change is constant and affects all cities, towns, suburbs, counties, boroughs, townships, rural areas, and other places; and

WHEREAS, community planning and plans can help manage this change in a way that provides better choices for how people work and live; and

WHEREAS, community planning provides an opportunity for all residents to be meaningfully involved in making choices that determine the future of their community; and

WHEREAS, the full benefits of planning requires public officials and citizens who understand, support, and demand excellence in planning and plan implementation; and

WHEREAS, the month of October is designated as National Community Planning Month throughout the United States of America and its territories, and

WHEREAS, American Planning Association endorses National Community Planning Month as an opportunity to highlight how planning is essential to recovery and how planners can lead communities to equitable, resilient and long-lasting recovery; and

WHEREAS, the celebration of National Community Planning Month gives us the opportunity to publicly recognize the participation and dedication of the members of planning commissions and other citizen planners who have contributed their time and expertise to the improvement of the *(State, City, or County)* of _____ *(insert name of state, city, or county)*; and

WHEREAS, we recognize the many valuable contributions made by professional community and regional planners of the _____ *(State or City or County)* of _____ *(insert name of state, city,*

or county) and extend our heartfelt thanks for the continued commitment to public service by these professionals;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the month of October 2022 is hereby designated as **Community Planning Month** in the _____ (State or City or County) of _____ (insert name of state, city, or county) in conjunction with the celebration of National Community Planning Month.

Adopted this _____ day of _____, 2022.

_____ (SEAL)

Chief Elected Official

Clerk

Connie Dalton asked the commission members to review these ideas and if it was something they wanted to have further discussion or move forward with then it could be added to the September agenda.

Connie Dalton provided the following updates:

She attended the National Planning Association meeting in Roanoke. She encouraged the members to look at Danville's website to see what they had accomplished in the last twenty years. She also encouraged the members to look at Perdue Grainery's website. She felt both were very interesting.

She gave the members one handout for the members to share from Virginia Housing. She stated that the handout discusses when someone wants to do affordable housing, workforce housing or redevelopment how Virginia Housing can come in and support the effort and provide opportunities to assist in moving those forward.

Chair Bradshaw mentioned there is a Tour of Tappahannock on a youtube website and said he would send her the link.

She mentioned the Britalians came to the Town of Tappahannock and did some interviews with some folks and the Town of Tappahannock and it is scheduled to release in the fall and will be featured on their TV show.

Connie Dalton gave an update on Town businesses:

Twice the Ice has opened
Maltese Brewing has had a soft opening
1710 Tavern should open in mid-August
MODwash is under construction
Act XII Wine and Provisions is hoping for a fall opening
Sara Cait's is a new shop that opened
Starbucks site plan is out for review

She will be attending the Essex County Board of Supervisors meeting next week. She stated that the Essex County GIS Department is going to be presenting their findings on confirming the Town's boundary and that will help get our Comprehensive Plan update completed.

She stated that the commission members may have noticed the two gateway signs for Welcome to Downtown Tappahannock have been installed, someone planted a flower garden on Prince Street, and four dog waste stations have been installed in the Town's public parks.

Connie Dalton stated that she has a Board of Zoning Appeals meeting Thursday, August 3, 2023, for a variance and a special.

Chair Bradshaw asked if there were any new applications from citizens to join the planning commission.

Connie Dalton stated that she has not received any applications.

- **Tour of the Town Summary Report**

Commission Member Hilowitz reviewed the summary report. (See handout)

Commission Member Hilowitz stated that if there is something that needs to be included in the summary report to please let her know and she will formally edit and submit the summary report at the September meeting.

Chair Bradshaw stated that since they discussed the lack of facilities for children on Marsh Street, then maybe that should be added.

Commission Member Carneal asked Commission Member Hilowitz to email each member the report so that they can review and make any recommendations.

Commission Member Pitts asked that an article be placed in the Town's newsletter emphasizing what the Tappahannock Planning Commission members are trying to make improvements on.

Connie Dalton reminded the Planning Commission that the newsletter has limited space so when something has been drafted send it to Town Manager Pollitt, Sara Cait Gallagher, his assistant and herself to be included in the newsletter.

- **Other Items of discussion**

Commission Member Vaughan stated that on the tour of the town there was some discussion about what the Town land at the "Wakefield Triangle" on Cralle Avenue could be used for. She asked Connie Dalton to share the documents.

Commission Member Vaughan stated that on the tour of the town there was some discussion about a stakeholder's group being formed regarding the Essex Mobile Home Park on Airport Road. She asked what the status of the stakeholder's group was.

Connie Dalton stated that she had some people express interest in participating in a stakeholder's group, but a formal group has not been identified nor have any meetings been scheduled.

Chair Bradshaw stated that concluded our agenda items and asked if there were any other items for discussion.

- **Training**

Commission Member Vaughan asked if the Planning Commission members were still interested in looking at training options for the members.

Chair Bradshaw stated that he is interested. He suggested that the members review the slides that VCU presented to the members a few years ago.

(Note: The members were sent the presentation slides from VCU in a follow up e-mail after the meeting.)

Commission Member Vaughan stated that she felt that was an introduction, and she feels that the members could benefit from more training. She stated that VCU offers certified training for planning commission members and the American Planners Association also provides training but she is not sure of the cost.

Commission Member Carneal stated that she will do some research to see what is available.

Commission Member Pitts stated that she feels some training will help the members understand what their role is and help them become more effective.

After some discussion the members decided that they will do some research on the training options and then present it to the Town Manager Pollitt for potential funding.


Chair Bradshaw entertained a motion to adjourn.


On motion of Elaine Hilowitz, seconded by Yvonne Vaughan, the Planning Commission voted to adjourn at 8:00 p.m.

Votes were cast as follows:

Dianna Carneal: Aye
Elaine Hilowitz: Aye
Maria Pitts: Aye

Timothy Bradshaw: Aye
Yvonne Vaughan: Aye


Timothy Bradshaw, Chair


Patsy K. Scates, Secretary

Town of Tappahannock Planning Commission Town Excursion

Present: Timothy Bradshaw - Chairman
Dianna Carneal - Vice Chairman
Yvonne Vaughn
Maria Pitts
Elaine Hilowitz
Connie Dalton - Community Development Director and Zoning
Administrator

First, we would like to again thank Tappahannock Chevrolet for donating a van for the Commission to use for this venture.

On July 8, 2023, the Town of Tappahannock Planning Commission embarked on a trip around the Town of Tappahannock. The purpose of this trip was to familiarize ourselves with the town and to assess areas of need for future planning.

The Trip started from the Town Office Building on Church Lane and proceeded to Sycamore Dr. There we toured the subdivision, townhouse subdivision, and St. Margaret's athletic field.

Then to South White Oak Dr indicating where the town/county line was. On Hobbs Hole Dr we saw the area for the proposed housing development in Essex County.

We next went to Winston Rd and toured the area trying to determine the town line in that area. There was a discussion regarding the apartments and homes in the area, with some historical background provided.

We proceeded to Richmond Beach Rd to see the Granary and auto repair shops. It was stated that a large number of cars were being housed in that area. It was explained these were cars that had been repaired, but the owners could not pay for the repairs.

We passed the property on Church Lane which is slated to be developed into a boat launch and recreation area.

Next, we toured the Wakefield subdivision and the surrounding areas. Several unique characteristics of the Town were noted, including the lack of vehicle access to the softball field from Wakefield.

On the way to Marsh Road, we noted some houses that had been condemned and areas that needed attention.

On Marsh Road, we noted several abandoned buildings, looked at the Intermediate School, passed the bus depot, drove along the airport property (noting where an extension could go to connect Marsh St and Airport Rd. We spent a good amount of time discussing the little league field, and water drainage problems in the area.

On departing Marsh Rd onto Church Lane, the Commission was advised that every school bus had to enter and exit at this point twice a day when school was in session. This creates a traffic hazard and requires the Sheriff's office to provide for traffic control.

Along Airport Road we toured the Trailer Parks, noting the condition of some trailers and the roads. A history of this area was discussed and methods to improve the conditions in those areas were noted. We also asked about an abandoned building on Airport Rd.

On Airport Rd. we passed the High School, noting how close the bus depot was to Airport Rd, and that there was no access from the bus depot to Airport Rd. We drove on the runway of the airport property and noted conditions on the property.

Returning we toured the historic section of town. We saw the property slated for a park, the tennis and pickleball courts, Rappahannock River Park, and several buildings that had recently requested alterations or signage changes.

Returned to the Town Office Building.

The tour lasted about 2 hours.

