

**MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**  
**Wednesday, February 21, 2018**  
**10<sup>th</sup> Floor City Council Conference Room**  
**2400 Washington Avenue**  
**Newport News, Virginia**

**PRESENT:** Mark W. Mulvaney, Chairman; Daniel L. Simmons, Jr., Vice-Chairman; Sharyn L. Fox; Zachary E. Wittkamp; Michael F. Carpenter; Katie Stodghill; Elizabeth W. Willis; N. Steve Groce; (Staff: Sheila McAllister, Director of Planning; Britta Ayers, Manager of Comprehensive Planning; Claudia Cotton, Manager of Current Planning; Flora Chioros, Planning Coordinator; Saul Gleiser, Senior Planner; Angela Hopkins, Senior Planner; Garrett Morgan, Senior Planner; David Watson, Planner; Johnnie Davis, Planner; Jonathan Herman, Landscape Planner; Lynn Spratley, Deputy City Attorney; Christine Mignogna, Zoning Administrator)

**ABSENT:** Willard G. Maxwell, Jr.

Mr. Simmons opened the work session at 2:00 P.M.

Mr. Simmons introduced the first item on the agenda: Draft Comprehensive Plan Discussion. Ms. McAllister stated at the last work session, the Planning Commission was given a presentation of the comprehensive plan, so today we want to go through the plan and discuss any comments, changes or additions the Commission feels should be included.

Mr. Simmons stated there were a couple concerns he had regarding graphics, but those questions have already been answered. He stated this is a draft copy and the final copy will have improved graphics. Ms. Ayers stated that is correct. She stated we will be adding more photographs from areas across the city to show what a diverse city we are.

Ms. Ayers stated some Planning Commissioners were part of the Comprehensive Plan Citizen Advisory Committee (CPCAC), so they know how we got to these recommendations and priorities. She stated that, for those who were not part of the CPCAC, she stressed that we spent 18 months going out and talking to as many people and organizations across Newport News as we could reach. Ms. Ayers stated we had focus groups, interviews, community meetings, and she attended various organization meetings where she was invited to talk, such as bicycle groups, business associations, and diverse groups across the city. She stated we used every opportunity we could to share information, but more importantly, to get feedback from citizens to understand the existing conditions and some of the priorities that citizens see for a better future. Ms. Ayers stated that included everything from diverse housing to more outdoor play areas, ball fields, etc. She stated all of the things you see reflected in the draft comprehensive plan come from either the survey we administered or the direct outreach that we did to get input from the community. Ms. Ayers stated this information did not just come from our CPCAC. She stated the CPCAC helped compile all of the information that we got

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from across the city, and then we worked together to organize it and prioritize our concerns and our implementation actions.

Mr. Simmons stated staff, the CPCAC and the citizens did a wonderful job with this plan. He stated there is a lot of input that goes into putting together a plan, and a lot of time. Mr. Simmons stated this is a great opportunity for the citizens of Newport News to be proud thanks to the time they have spent and being involved in helping staff develop a new plan for the city.

Ms. McAllister opened the discussion for Chapter 1 – Introduction. Ms. Willis stated we previously talked about color changes.

Ms. McAllister opened the discussion for Chapter 2 – Existing Conditions. Ms. Willis stated some of the tables did not represent what they were saying it represented.

Ms. Stodghill asked if the graduation rates presented on Page 31 would be updated from 2015 data to present. Ms. Ayers stated we had to draw a line somewhere and we mentioned that in the document. She stated if we keep updating everything we will never finish this document, so we had to have a cut-off, unless it was something that was very critical where the group decided 2016 data needed to be represented.

Mr. Simmons asked if the electronic version will have hyperlinks. Ms. Ayers stated that is our intent, but right now we have a challenge with the software the city uses for the website. She stated for right now, we will highlight and bold those hyperlinks so they stand out and we know where they will be in the future. Ms. Ayers stated our intent is that in the future you can click on a hyperlink that will take you to another section or you can click on a map and it will pop-up in larger format so you can see the details. Mr. Simmons asked if that will give anyone viewing the plan access to the city's Geographic Information System (GIS). Ms. Ayers stated no. She stated the hyperlink is intended for moving from one section to another in the document for reference or if there is a reference that we use from outside of the document to go to another website. Ms. Ayers stated we were going to use maps that are embedded in the document and not send users to another site using GIS.

Ms. Fox asked if the cut-off time for data is 2015, why do some tables, such as Figure 11, have additional data. Ms. Ayers stated those numbers are projections.

Ms. Stodghill asked since we show the enterprise zones, do we talk about the other zones, like hub zones. She stated if people are looking for ways to fund their projects, there are different zones they fall within. Ms. Ayers stated we can add it to Figure 13. Ms. Stodghill stated there should be information if there are any financial incentives for people, if they fall within different zones. She stated enterprise is one that everybody knows, but sometimes they do not realize they fall into a hub zone.

Ms. Fox asked if there is a reason to include maps for flood zone areas. Ms. Ayers stated there is a flood zone map and we do talk about flood zones, but if a property owner is looking for specific information for their property, they should not be using the map in the comprehensive plan.

Ms. McAllister opened the discussion for Chapter 3 – Planning Legacy. Ms. Willis asked if new plans are done, will they come to Planning Commission to add it to the comprehensive plan. Ms. McAllister stated yes. Ms. Ayers stated, for example, the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative Transformation Plan will be adopted this summer, and next time we do a comprehensive plan update it will be part of the planning legacy and any recommendations would be added to the implementation section. Ms. Willis asked if there is a place to keep track of what gets added after the fact. Ms. Ayers stated we will be doing that. She stated in Chapter 6 we talk about how we want to monitor and report each year back to the Planning Commission about progress made. She stated we need to come up with a template that allows us to track and then present it back to the Planning Commission and the public. Ms. Willis asked if all of the plans made it into the draft comprehensive plan. Ms. Ayers stated any plan that was officially adopted by the City Council is included in Chapter 3. Mr. Carpenter asked how far back the plans go. Ms. Ayers stated they begin with Warwick County in 1958. Ms. McAllister stated those are no longer active. She stated plans are usually active for about 20 years. Ms. Willis asked if the City Farm plan would fall under the Deep Creek-Menchville Master Plan. Ms. Ayers stated yes. Mr. Carpenter asked what is the date on that plan. Ms. Ayers stated 1990.

Ms. Stodghill asked what plan was presented at the State of the City Address. Ms. Ayers stated it was the downtown vision. Ms. McAllister stated it will not show up in the draft comprehensive plan. Ms. Stodghill stated the photographs are in the plan. Ms. Ayers stated we talk about that as an opportunity area. Ms. McAllister stated it is a vision that was created for downtown, but it has not been adopted. Mr. Simmons asked if the downtown charrette was incorporated into the draft comprehensive plan. Ms. Ayers stated it was not adopted by City Council, so it does not go in that section, but it is discussed under Existing Conditions and in Chapter 5.

Ms. McAllister opened the discussion for Chapter 4 – The Dream. She stated the dream is the future plan. Mr. Carpenter stated it seems like we do a fair amount for people who want to come to town and build something and create jobs. He stated the other side of the coin is people who want to promote maintaining the environment of the area. Mr. Carpenter asked if we are doing enough to protect the environmental side and maybe doing too much to promote the enterprise side. He stated if we do too much to promote enterprise, we get overdeveloped and we are not a pretty place to be, and then no one wants to live or work here. Ms. Ayers stated in the big picture we try to balance the two. She stated we have recommendations for some things we feel we need as a city to ensure that we are a more sustainable city, one of them being the financing or funds to do a natural resources management plan and a cultural resources management plan that would allow us to better inventory and monitor our natural and

cultural resources. Ms. Ayers stated we probably also need to look at our ordinances to see if we are requiring sufficient green space from developments, large and small. She stated overall, the guidance in this document is that we do want to be greener, and preserve those assets that we have because once they are gone, they are gone. Ms. Fox stated we are so developed already and there is very little undeveloped space left in our city. She stated she likes that we focused on a lot of redevelopment, but we need to be careful with what we have left. Ms. Ayers stated another opportunity to really hone in on making sure that we balance is with the area plans that we have proposed. She stated that is where we are really getting into the details of what a lot of people would like to see in specific areas. Ms. Ayers stated, for example, we will be starting the Denbigh-Warwick area plan in the next month. She stated we are hiring a consultant right now. Ms. Ayers stated the intent is go in there and do a detailed assessment of the study area to document all of the assets, whether they are natural environment, built environment or people, and then work with the community to determine what we need to preserve, what opportunities we have to build on, and what we absolutely do not want to see happen in those areas where there is some redevelopment potential. She stated that is where we can start talking about site specific things we would like to see as sites redevelop. Ms. Fox stated that whole corridor is almost completely developed, so redevelopment is key. Ms. McAllister stated the reason you do the plan prior to redevelopment is because you already see the decline happening so you want to make sure that you are proactive and you have in place how you would like to see the area redeveloped. She stated right now your zoning and everything is in place for it to just redevelop the way it developed.

Mr. Mulvaney stated we can develop plans for redevelopment, but are we going to ensure that we require buffers and green spaces that currently are not occurring in some of our developments.

Ms. Ayers stated from what we have put together, we talk about all of those things and tried to find a happy medium, but this is not what is being used to approve various development applications or site plans. Ms. Fox stated this is an opportunity for us to say this is what we want. Ms. McAllister stated you are saying this is what you want, but to make it happen you have to put it in an implementation ordinance. Mr. Mulvaney stated this needs to be the guiding principle. Mr. Carpenter stated the next step is putting it into the regulations. Ms. Spratley stated under Chapter 4 one of the goals is to sustain, balance and go greener. She stated one of the objectives under that is to encourage development that is context sensitive and supports the balance between the built and natural environments that minimizes environmental impact. Ms. Spratley stated the next step would be to create an ordinance. Mr. Carpenter stated if we want to follow through on this, some of the existing regulations need to be rewritten. Ms. McAllister stated that is correct, and they would need to be reinforced. She stated we cannot do anything until the plan is adopted. Ms. McAllister stated the next step would be going through and revisiting those ordinances to make sure they are in line with what is in the plan. Ms. Stodghill stated the plan is generous enough that anything could happen. Mr. Mulvaney stated the plan allows us to fine tune ordinances to adapt to it.

Ms. McAllister opened the discussion for Chapter 5 – Future Land Use and Transportation Plan. Mr. Mulvaney asked when we say Future Land Use 2040, are there segments. Ms. McAllister stated the implementation is segmented, but the Future Land Use Plan is just that. Ms. Ayers stated the thing to keep in mind, in Newport News we are pretty much built-out, and the Future Land Use Plan looks very much like the Existing Land Use Plan, except in those areas where we know, either from the currently adopted *Framework for the Future 2030* and other studies that we have done, where we have identified areas for revitalization or redevelopment. Mr. Mulvaney asked because they are so similar, how do we attract development of new business. Ms. Ayers stated through your area plans. She stated that is where you go into the details of what is realistic and site specific. Ms. Ayers stated, for example, with the Denbigh-Warwick Area Plan, we will be having a market analysis done. She stated we know that there are a lot of commercial areas or centers up and down Warwick Boulevard where some of them are empty or pretty close to empty, and some have third and fourth tier uses in them. Ms. Ayers asked is that something we want to see long term. She stated probably not, but first we need to understand what the market can support, both locally and as part of the region. Ms. Ayers stated we will do that in detail with that process and then we will have very specific recommendations. She stated it may include changing land use designations, but we have to go through that process.

Ms. Stodghill asked where are the special purpose and planning opportunity areas. Ms. Ayers stated there is a symbol and it is on a map. She stated we would like people to be able to click on a hyperlink and blow up the map for review. Ms. Ayers shared two large printed maps with the Planning Commission: Future Land Use Map and Future Transportation Map.

Ms. McAllister opened the discussion for Chapter 6 – Implementation. Mr. Groce stated he would like to suggest that the language in 6.4 Action Plan, specifically about timeframe and resources be placed throughout the document to remind people that conditions can change and things may not happen the way they want them to.

Ms. Stodghill stated when we refer to a project being in the Capital Improvements Program (CIP), we do not specify to which year the CIP refers. Ms. McAllister stated the problem is that something can be in the CIP but not yet implemented due to funding, etc. She stated for instance, Stoney Run Park has to wait until it completes closure of the landfill. Ms. Fox asked if there are things under implementation that have already been done, such as Atkinson Boulevard. Ms. Ayers stated it is under construction, but it needs to stay in because the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) requires it to be in the comprehensive plan. She stated it was not in the last comprehensive plan, so it needs to be in this one even though it is already started. Ms. Ayers stated there are phases to the Implementation Plan and we tried to provide some flexibility with the short-range, mid-range and long-range because the financial situation changes from year to year and decisions have to be made about what gets funded and what needs to get pushed back to another year. Ms. Stodghill stated very few things were in the CIP. Ms. Ayers stated a lot of the projects are going to require capital funds and they are

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going to be in the CIP. She stated this gives the framework for those departments that are responsible for implementation to make sure it is part of their CIP requests.

Ms. Fox asked what would drive something to be an action type for the CIP rather than just coordination and planning. She stated there is "identify and secure funding for Parks and Recreation plan implementation" and that is a CIP item. Ms. Willis stated yes, but you are going to need major capital in order to build those things. Ms. McAllister stated it shows that we already have plans that have been adopted and need to continue to be pushed to get developed.

Mr. Mulvaney asked if it would be onerous to put a small definitions component for the layman who reads this to understand things like a CIP. Ms. Stodghill stated she would like a flowchart of the process to get an item on the CIP. Ms. Ayers stated we will see if we can come up with something useful in terms of a flowchart, but we do have a glossary that is going in the plan.

Mr. Simmons thanked the citizens who participated in the comprehensive plan process and Planning staff for their hard work.

Ms. Fox asked when the comprehensive plan will be presented at a public hearing. Ms. McAllister stated that prior to scheduling the public hearing we need to have all of the graphics corrected and there is still some work to be done on the draft. Mr. Carpenter asked when to expect the final document to be available. Ms. Ayers stated after April 2018.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:20 P.M.

  
Recording Secretary

  
Executive Secretary