

Comprehensive Plan Citizen Advisory Committee (CPCAC)
Meeting Summary
January 14, 2016
Downing-Gross Cultural Arts Center
4:00 p.m.

PRESENT: John Allen, III; Phil Bomersheim; John Dawson; Sharyn Fox; Jan Gray; Steve Groce; Rodney Hopkins; Christine Ledford; Mike Minarik; Michael Poplawski; Dawn Ramirez; Jonathan Skinner, Vice-Chairman; Deirdre Wells, Chairwoman; Veronica Weymouth; Telly Whitfield; Beth Willis; Jeffrey Wilson

ABSENT: Trip Ferguson; Susan Gaston; Jim Kelly; Joe Leming; Cleon Long; Diana LoVecchio; Allie Loving; Chris Morello; Sandra Powell; Nathan Sturre;

OTHERS

PRESENT: Sandra Cherry, City Council
Michael F. Carpenter, Chairman, City Planning Commission
Lorraine Austin, City Planning Commission
Robert Jones, City Planning Commission
Drew Robbins, NWS Yorktown

STAFF: Sheila McAllister, Director of Planning
Britta Ayers, Manager of Comprehensive Planning
Claudia Cotton, Manager of Current Planning
Angela Y. Hopkins, Senior Planner
Flora Chioros, Landscape Planner II
Sandy Hitchens, Planning Technician

Agenda Topics

1. Call to Order

Chairwoman Wells called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m.

2. Review and approval of Meeting Summary

The CPCAC accepted and approved the December 10, 2015 meeting summary as presented.

3. Existing Conditions

Ms. Ayers reminded the CPCAC that as it continues its discussion of the existing chapter to consider the following questions:

- Does the information tell a story? If not, what is missing?
- Does the information flow?
- Is the information structured appropriately?
- What graphics are missing?

The CPCAC was also reminded that when this discussion is completed and staff has received all CPCAC recommendations and guidance to move forward, staff will need

another hiatus to incorporate that input and make the connection between existing conditions and the vision that will form "how we get there."

Questions, Comments, and Recommendations

Note: The following is a brief summary of key discussion points. All recommendations for corrections to the draft narrative made during the meeting are captured in a matrix that will be provided to the committee with the revised narrative.

2.3 An Accessible City

Chairwoman Wells suggested that a general timeframe be included as part of the information for the projects identified in lines 34-38.

Mr. Allen stated that it would be helpful if the capacity of I-64 is clearly defined because the interstate is not congested all of the time. To clarify the statement in lines 39-42, language should be added that identifies what the points of congestion are or choke points and where these choke points are located.

Several members stated that they had not reviewed Section 2.3, as it was not included in the email sent to them last week. Ms. Ayers replied that Section 2.3 was emailed to the committee in December. As not everyone was prepared to discuss this section, Chairwoman Wells tabled the discussion to the next scheduled meeting on January 28.

2.4 A Healthy and Safe City

Ms. Ayers reminded the CPCAC that the "What We Heard" section is going to change slightly. The list of challenges and opportunities will be woven into the existing conditions narrative where appropriate and all other information will be included in the "What We Heard" reports, which will be appendices to the comprehensive plan.

Ms. Ramirez stated there is a lot of important information in this document and that it may be helpful if those statements or achievements are identified in bold type or highlighted to emphasize to the reader its importance and/or significance. Ms. Ayers replied that it is a good idea, but it would be difficult to do at this stage of the review process. She noted that staff has been coordinating with the graphic designer on the document layout; bold face, callouts and other methods will be used to emphasize information. Layout will be done once the document is closer to the publishing stage. In the meantime, if there are key phrases, achievements, facts or information that the CPCAC would like emphasized they should identify them during the review and staff will keep track of it in the matrix of revisions and corrections.

Dr. Dawson stated important information was not included in this section of existing conditions and provided the following comments:

- There should be information regarding the Community Services Board.

- There should be a discussion about mental health.
- There should be some mention of TPMG or similar clinics as well as Riverside and its School of Health Careers. Furthermore, Riverside is the only accredited Emergency and Trauma Center serving the Virginia Peninsula and surrounding areas. This is important information that should be included in the comprehensive plan.

Ms. Ledford stated the paragraph starting at line 35 has very good information, but contextually seems to be out of place. The information either needs to be in a different location in the section or there needs to be better transitioning to the language in its current location. Ms. Ayers suggested it may be more appropriate to relocate the information to the beginning of the public health section.

Mr. Allen suggested that a hyperlink to VDOT's *Virginia Safe Routes to School Five-Year Strategic Plan (2012-2017)* be placed in line 60 to allow readers further information on how these routes are determined to be safe. Mr. Gray gave B.C. Charles as an example of where a safe route would be beneficial to a neighborhood. Due to the lack of sidewalks, students have to walk across private property or in the street to get to the school. Ms. Weymouth stated based on the B.C. Charles example that "new sidewalks" should be added to the information in lines 69-70.

Chairwoman Wells stated that as the CPCAC continues its discussion, it should give some thought to the idea of creating walkability to schools especially when Newport News is a city of magnets schools. For example, a student living in the Southeast Community could attend the magnet program at Woodside High School or a student living in Denbigh or Lee Hall could attend the magnet program at Heritage High School. In this example both schools are at opposite ends of the city from where the students live.

Mr. Wilson stated that collocation in line 114 is spelled incorrectly.

Mr. Gray suggested that under Urban Services there should be a discussion about the impacts of clear cutting on forest land, water quality and recreational areas.

Chairwoman Wells asked if vacant and abandoned buildings could be utilized for the collocation of programs and services identified in line 114. Ms. Ayers answered no, not as part of the existing conditions. But, it is something that could be considered as a possible recommendation as the CPCAC moves through the planning process.

Chairwoman Wells stated there is a lot of important information provided regarding parks and recreation on lines 179-265, but there is no mention about the fishing pier. Mr. Poplawski stated the fishing pier should definitely be included in this information. In fact, the fishing pier will be the longest on the east coast.

Ms. Ledford asked why the city is deficient in parks as stated in line 194. This information

should be included as part of the discussion of the existing conditions.

Ms. Weymouth asked why the Boys and Girls Club on Dresden Drive was not included in the information in lines 194-265. Ms. Ayers stated that it would be impossible to include all facilities that are within the city, but if there are some unique or significant facilities that should be identified, they could be displayed in a highlighted or call out reference as suggested by Ms. Ramirez.

Ms. Fox stated lines 249-250 discusses the fact that revenue from golf is steadily declining because of the aging infrastructure of the golf courses and the appeal of newer more updated courses. Where are these newer courses? Are they in Newport News? Chairwoman Wells stated that they are in surrounding localities such as York County. Both agreed that this information is important to include because it indicates that the city is losing revenue to other localities.

Mr. Poplawski stated this year is the 50th Anniversary of Newport News Park. In 1966, the first thing constructed in the park was the golf course. At one time, Newport News and Fort Eustis had the only golf courses on the Peninsula. It should be noted that Newport News golf course has never received any significant refurbishment. Presently, there are 19 golf courses between Williamsburg and Hampton and all of these are newer than the courses in the city.

Ms. Willis stated it might be helpful if the senior centers listed in line 224 could be shown on a map or include the location in the narrative.

Mr. Poplawski made the following comments:

- In line 198, add the language "increasing park use and visitation" to the end of the sentence because the insufficient maintenance and upkeep is due to the increased use of parks. Visitation since the 1970s has tripled and the number of city parks has doubled during the same time period. The number of park rangers is the same as it was in 1975; however, the number of maintenance personnel has actually dropped since 1975. Parks staff has not kept pace with the increase of use and visitation.
- Line 206, change 35 to 36 not including Newport News Park with a total of 37 parks
- Line 214, add "privately owned" in front of Mariner's Museum property
- Line 227 add "should be programmed in the CIP" to the end of the sentence to help clarify the intent
- Line 235 add "limited and" before the word overcrowded
- Line 238 add "four" recreational center gymnasiums
- Line 246 should read "Newport News Golf Club at Deer Run is a public facility with a championship course with 18 holes with the remaining 18 holes as a par 3 course".
- Line 255 change "periods of low tide" to "between periods of dredging"
- Provide a list of parks and the dates they were established

Ms. Fox asked if a map showing the city's marinas could be included to this section.

Mr. Wilson stated in lines 313-370 within the Police section it does not mention the Police Headquarters or the new South Police Precinct, which are considered to be the most advanced police stations in the area.

Ms. Ledford suggested that it would be helpful if there were a list or map showing the city's public facilities.

Mr. Allen asked what the difference is between door count and registered patrons discussed in line 279. Ms. Ayers stated a registered patron is someone with a library card that checks out materials and a door count includes anyone that comes through the door whether they are using the library or its resources. Mr. Allen asked about the person who does both, how are they counted. Is there the possibility that they are double counted, which would increase the number? Ms. Ayers replied that staff will need to clarify how the count is taken with the Director of Library Services.

Mr. Wilson stated that the information in this section is very good, but it appears that the first thing the reader sees are the negative issues facing the city. It was suggested that there be more emphasis placed on the good and positive things that the city is doing first, followed by the issues and/or challenges. Do not lead with what is wrong; instead lead with what is right.

Chairwoman Wells would like to include information regarding the children's reading program as a great accomplishment of Library Services.

Ms. Fox asked if the West Avenue Library is closed as identified in line 268, should it be included in the existing conditions. Ms. Ayers stated that it is closed to the public, but it remains a facility that is in the city's inventory and at some point, the city must decide what happens to the facility. Future use of the West Avenue Library is something the CPCAC could consider as part of its recommendations. Mr. Wilson suggested changing the language to read "administrative purposes" instead of "closed," which better reflects the status of the facility.

Mr. Allen stated that the award received by the Pearl Bailey Library in line 289 should be emphasized instead of buried in some other statement. Ms. Ayers agreed and stated this could be an example of information that would be highlighted or in bold type to grab the attention of the reader.

Ms. Ramirez suggested showing the information presented in line 323 in graphic form such as a pie chart.

Mr. Allen suggested the information in line 386 be added to the list of major

achievements that should be highlighted or in bold type.

Mr. Skinner stated the information regarding STEP in line 349 is written as if the program has reached its conclusion. If this is not the case, the sentence should be changed to read during “summer” programs, this way the reader understands the program is still active and is not terminated.

Mr. Wilson noted that as abbreviations are used, staff should ensure that they are not misunderstood by the reader to mean something different than what is intended. For example, in line 384, ISO could mean something different than Insurance Service Office. Ms. Ayers stated that was a good point and that staff would try and minimize the number of acronyms used in the document.

Mr. Wilson stated that the Sheriff’s Office has some new programs that they may want to include in this section. Mr. Poplawski concurred, especially with the program where prisoners are provided to public works for non-law enforcement activities. Ms. Ayers stated that she will contact the Sheriff to see if there are any more programs that should be included in this section. Mr. Allen stated that there should be some discussion of how Adult Corrections transitioned to its current role due to the closure of City Farm.

Ms. Fox stated that the information in lines 450-454 regarding City Farm is confusing. The way the statement is written, it implies that the city jail was overcrowded and could not accommodate the inmates coming from the closure of City Farm. Ms. Ayers stated that was not the intent nor should that be the impression that the reader should receive. Staff will clarify and revise the information.

Mr. Allen stated that there is no definition for EOC in line 476. Ms. Ayers replied that EOC was actually defined in a previous section, but maybe should be reintroduced here.

Ms. Weymouth asked if line 515 regarding the former Rite Aid needs to be included because in the future it may not serve as a police substation. Ms. Ayers agreed that the sentence should be deleted.

Mr. Allen stated that there needs to be more information emphasizing the fact that the waterworks system in the city is one of Newport News strongest and best assets.

Mr. Wilson stated that the word “spreading” should be changed to “increasing” in line 584. The word spreading gives the impression that crime is moving from section to section. Also, it may not be appropriate to identify specific neighborhoods, but rather identify geographical areas within the city.

Ms. Willis stated collocating is misspelled in line 599.

2.5 A City That Respects Its Uniqueness

Ms. Ledford noted the official name of the facility is the Christopher Newport University Ferguson Center for the Arts(line 43).

Mr. Gray stated this section needs more information about the historical significance of Newport News and not just buildings. Ms. Ayers replied that the purpose of this section is not to be a history book, but to provide a general overview of significant occurrences in the city's history. Staff will look at the language in lines 29-32 to see what additional information can be added.

Ms. Austin suggested that there be some mention or maybe a map showing where Sears homes were located in the city. This particular house played a unique and significant part of the housing history in the city.

Chairwoman Wells asked staff to verify the dates listed in line 111 pertaining to the establishment of the North End/Huntington Heights neighborhood. This neighborhood is believed to have pre-dated the years listed in the narrative.

Ms. Ledford stated the information in lines 127-130 should not be included in the existing conditions because it is an editorial comment.

Mr. Allen stated that there should be more information about the historic significance of the East End community especially the importance of this area to the African American community.

4. Unfinished and New Business

There was no unfinished or new business to report.

5. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:40 p.m.