

Gloucester County Community Meeting
Page Middle School
Thursday, March 20, 2008

AGENDA

- I. Welcome: Christopher Corr, Steering Committee Chairman
Warren Deal, Chairman of the 1991 Update
- II. Introductions:
 - a. Planning Staff
 - b. Members of the Citizen's Steering Committee, Planning Commission, and Board of Supervisors
- III. Comp Plan 101:
What is a Comprehensive Plan?
Presentation by: Anne Ducey-Ortiz, AICP
Planner III
- IV. Existing Conditions:
Status of Our Community, Current Planning, Trends, & Issues
Presentation by: Anne Ducey-Ortiz, AICP
Planner III
- V. Survey Summary:
Summary of the results from the 2007 Citizen Survey
Presentation by: Emily Gibson
Planner II
- VI. Discussion/Group break out:
Facilitation- Staff & Steering Committee
- VII. Conclusion:
What is the next step in the process?

Stay informed and provide us with feedback:
Go to the Planning Department Homepage- www.gloucesterva.info/planning
and click on "Comprehensive Plan Update"
Email comments to: comprehensiveplan@gloucesterva.info

For Your Information-

Coastal Access Survey 2008 Virginia Sea Grant and the Middle Peninsula Chesapeake Bay Public Access Authority are working to better understand public access needs and larger waterfront conflicts that may be occurring within the lower Chesapeake Bay region. The "Coastal Access Survey" is designed to gather this information. Use this link for more information and/or to complete the survey:
<http://www.wateraccess2007.com/survey.html>

Recap of March 20, 2008 Community Meeting

- Low Public Attendance but good representation from the Steering Committee
 - 12 of 18 member of Steering Committee attended
 - 3 Planning Commissioners
 - 3 Board Members (including Ms. Ressler – also counted as SC & PC representative)
 - Staff worked with Community Education and advertised in Beehive, local papers, website, PSA – articles about the meeting and low turn-out generated interest and hopefully we will see increased participation through email (bedroom community – working families)
 - We have received 3 comments since the meeting and will seek additional input through subscription to our Planning Newsgroup
 - Comments will be posted on the website – we are still working on creating that page – and updated on a regular basis
 - Emily sent out an email today with the link – Since establishing the newsgroup in March, we have had over 50 subscribers:
<http://www.gloucesterva.info/GloucesterConnectionDB>
- Staff gave presentations on existing conditions and the survey – both presentations are available on our website (www.gloucesterva.info/Planning) along with drafts and summaries of the previous meetings
- Comments for increased participation in survey – not everyone reads Beehive – not sure if increased effort would provide better results
- Discussion led by Christopher Corr, Chairman of the Steering Committee
- Issues discussed
 - Route 17– need to consider growth in traffic from adjacent communities – county’s population increasing at 1- 1.5% and traffic on Route 17 increasing at 3%
 - Plan for growth by density of people per square mile – do we want them spread out or on top of each other
 - Need general philosophy that existing tax payers should not pay for new development - this philosophy is in our current plan
 - Concern for lack of specifics in the current plan – especially in the transportation section
 - A build-out analysis based on the current zoning really helped decision makers during the previous County-wide Rezoning
 - “Improve Traffic - Improve Growth”
 - Larger roads would result in more loss of rural character – some traffic is good to deter more growth
 - Connect Route 17 to TC- Walker Road
 - Sea level rise should be considered in Plan
 - Commercial Development – where and how far up Route 17 – look at the existing development district and where it stops
 - Competition with commercial growth in Middlesex – keep tax dollars in County if we are going to get their traffic versus protection of rural character in the northern part of the county – again look at growth and plans for adjacent counties

- Commercial Development and re-development on Route 17 within the Development District – cost of improvements required by VDOT and for connection to water and sewer impacts development more than zoning
- Low tech/high tech – need quality workers in the County – training, quality housing
- Consider Lower Density Zoning with concentric circles – greater than the current minimum of 5 acres
- Affordable Housing –
 - During the County-wide rezoning in 1998, the Planning Commission purposely left multi-family zoning out to have control of the quality of development through Rezoning process
 - Need incentives for affordable housing
 - Need performance standards for staff to evaluate where a rezoning would be appropriate – current plan doesn't provide standards for multi-family
 - Should be Development District with appropriate infrastructure
 - Design standards
 - Make non-conforming existing multi-family conforming to allow for redevelopment at permitted density with water & sewer
 - Allow accessory apartments by-right for owner occupied single family
 - Percent of units affordable for seniors also
 - Comment made that Gloucester County has a lot of relatively affordable housing – why current plan looked at quality of housing
- Need to consider Groundwater Resources when looking at future residential development – availability of water for private well not considered or tracked
- Need to consider the future changes which we can't predict – changes in technology, fuel costs, sea level rise – others that we don't even know about – Need to manage the rate of growth with phasing over time
- Don't "use up" or plan for growth on all the land in the County – allow future generations the same option to have undeveloped land to plan for

Main Street Meeting April 2, 2008

- Gloucester Main Street Preservation Trust and Gloucester County contracted with Frazier and Associates and Muldrow & Associates to do a marketing and physical plan for Main Street between its intersection with Route 17 (end to end)
- Meeting to gather information from the community about what they would like to see – future meetings with recommendations and alternatives
- Good turn-out from merchants and property owners along Main Street as well as several Steering Committee members, Planning Commissioners and Board members
- Overall good news for what we have on Main Street and the potential to capture more of the retail market
- Marketing Power Point presentation is on Planning Department website – www.gloucesterva.info/Planning
- Plan to have final recommendations by end of summer

March 20th 2008 Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee Public Meeting at Page Middle School at 7:00pm.

Introductions were made by Jay Scudder, Director of Planning and also Christopher Corr, the Chairman of the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee recognizing members of the Steering Committee, Planning Commission, Board of Supervisors, and Planning Department Staff that were present.

Anne Ducey-Ortiz of the Planning Department Staff gave two power point presentations entitled "Comp Plan 101" and "Existing Conditions" describing the comprehensive planning process and summarizing the work of the committee to date.

Emily Gibson of the Planning Department Staff gave a power point presentation that gave a summary of the results of the 2007 Citizen Survey. All power presentations were made available on-line. Ms. Gibson also gave information about the county's website and available to sign up for a Planning Newsgroup.

Christopher Corr opened the floor for any comments or questions from the audience.

An audience member gave the suggestion that the survey that was discussed be sent out in a mailing to get better responses.

Another audience member brought up the growth in Middlesex and West Point and how it is going to affect the traffic coming through Gloucester via Route 17.

A discussion proceeded about not allowing growth in the Northern part of the County and how that will not stop the traffic problem on Route 17 because of the growth in Middlesex and other counties.

An audience member brought up the subject of density per square mile. He was in favor of less density.

A discussion proceeded concerning where we are in the question of whether it is better to build up or build out and the effects that will have on the county.

A member of the audience expressed his interest in the question of existing taxpayers footing the bill for developers and their projects.

A discussion followed concerning the process of updating the Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Department Staff gave examples of some of the Goals and Objectives that have been discussed so far.

Jay Scudder discussed Route 17 and some of the work that VDOT is going to be doing to it in the near future and how that effects the Comprehensive Plan. He also discussed some of the transportation options that have been brought up in prior meetings.

One audience member stated that he would like to see more specifics in the transportation section of the Comprehensive Plan.

Warren Deal discussed some of the transportation topics from the previous Comprehensive Plan.

There was a discussion about the possibility of having a series of road connections to make a secondary road alternative to Route 17.

A discussion followed about the commercial property available and the hardships put on an owner who wants to convert an old building on Route 17 to a new commercial facility.

A member of the audience suggested having more help from Rappahannock Community College and Gloucester High School to educate more high-tech workers so that there could be more high-tech facilities in Gloucester. A discussion followed about providing these people with homes.

An audience member asked what the plan was going to do about the commercial zoning past the Courthouse that seems to jump from one area to the other.

An audience member suggested using concentric circles to keep the rural character of Gloucester.

Christopher Corr brought up the question of work-force housing. One audience member suggested that no re-zoning to multi-family be done arbitrarily so that it can be regulated by having to go through the re-zoning process. Mr. Scudder and Mr. Frank Bryan, Executive Director of Habitat of Humanity, both discussed multi-family zoning and affordable, work-force housing and what decisions need to be made for the Comprehensive Plan.

An audience member agreed with Gloucester having a need for workforce housing to support our teachers, policemen, etc.

One audience member stated that he would like the record to show that he does not support “welfare housing”. This audience member discussed how he came from a town where the teachers and policemen commuted from other towns and he does not see a problem with that.

Another audience member brought up the fact that affordable housing would also support senior citizens that are looking to downsize, that have lived here all their lives.

A discussion followed about how much the employees at Wal-Mart make and whether or not they can afford to live in Gloucester.

Warren Deal stated that Gloucester County has some of the most affordable housing in this area. He stated that whether there is enough of it is the question.

Keith Belvin brought up a discussion about developing in phases so that future generations have the opportunity to be planning like we are now.

A member of the audience stated that the water table should be considered when we are tracking the development that is going on in Gloucester County. A discussion followed about the water table and ground water supply and state requirements for localities to have a water supply plan.

A member of the audience started a discussion on water and sewer coming to different areas of Gloucester and when this would be happening.

Christopher Corr discussed what was going to be happening next in the Comprehensive Plan Process. He stated that he thought the next public meeting should be around June or July.