

MINUTES  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
COUNTY OF YORK

Adjourned Meeting  
September 14, 2004

7:00 p.m.

Meeting Convened. An Adjourned Meeting of the York County Board of Supervisors was called to order at 7:01 p.m., Tuesday, September 14, 2004, in the East Room, York Hall, by Chairman Thomas G. Shepperd, Jr.

Attendance. The following members of the Board of Supervisors were present: Walter C. Zarembo, Sheila S. Noll, Kenneth L. Bowman, James S. Burgett, and Thomas G. Shepperd, Jr.

Also in attendance were James O. McReynolds, County Administrator; J. Mark Carter, Assistant County Administrator; and James E. Barnett, County Attorney.

**WORK SESSION**

**TAX RELIEF FOR THE ELDERLY AND DISABLED**

Mr. Frank Rogers, Department of Community Services, briefed the Board on the Elderly & Disabled Tax Relief Program, and he reviewed the state's tax exemption policies currently in place. He then provided background information on recent revisions to the program in 2002 and 2004. Mr. Rogers reviewed a table showing York County's current program and the amounts of exemption provided in each of the income categories. He discussed the amount of tax relief provided since 2001, stating there was a 50 percent increase over last year and a 125 percent increase over 2001.

Discussion followed regarding eligibility for the program and the reasons for the increased amount of tax relief, and making sure that those persons eligible for the program are aware of it. The Board also discussed the different types of tax relief programs, to include deferral.

Mr. Rogers reviewed a table showing how York County's program compares with other programs in surrounding jurisdictions. He then provided a summary of the previous state code versus the County program and the new state requirements. He reviewed the possible revisions to the County's program, noting that the total income limitation can now be increased to \$50,000, and the income exemption for relatives can be increased to \$10,000. The income exemption for disabled homeowners can be increased to \$10,000, and net worth, excluding dwelling and land, can be increased to \$200,000. He stated the acreage exemption can be increased to 10 acres. Mr. Rogers then discussed factors to be considered in making any changes to the County's current program.

Discussion following concerning the numbers of seniors who will not qualify for the program.

Mrs. Noll stated she feels the General Assembly has been very generous. She noted that the County also has young families who earn somewhat in this range and have no breaks at all. Mrs. Noll stated she has always been a proponent of helping the seniors, but a balance must be found.

Mr. Zarembo reminded the Board that this program is to help seniors who have restricted income, and the target is not for the young professional family.

Chairman Shepperd stated the bottom line is that there are no free rides, and because of the state's tax structure, this program is the County's version of a homestead exemption.

Mr. Bowman stated that looking at the number of eligible persons and the possible increase in the future, he feels that, based on the current assessment, the program is not going to benefit that many people but will bring some of them some relief. He stated he does not see this program going to the extreme in lost revenue.

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Chairman Shepperd indicated he has a couple of farms in his district with some residents who have been on the properties for ages, and the property is out in the woods and close to the water. He spoke of the acreage issue, stating some of these people would qualify given 10 acres. One of them has sold part of his land because he could not pay his taxes. Mr. Shepperd stated the issue is that the County is driving more people to sell and divide up their property, and what this program does for him is to give some relief and allow some people to hold on to their property longer. The other side of the issue is the idea of just how many people could be eligible. The percentage is very small, but the dollar amount is around 1 cent on the tax rate which is the County's cost for the elderly.

Mr. Zaremba stated this program is very important to the citizens. The County's assessments went through the ceiling this year, and there are many individuals in the County who are elderly and purchased their homes at costs much less than its assessment. Mr. Zaremba indicated the County needs to educate the people that this program is available.

Mrs. Anne B. Smith, Director of Community Services, discussed the many ways the staff puts out information on the program. She stated the only thing that has not been done is a paid advertisement.

Chairman Shepperd asked what the program will cost the County if the Board agrees to the maximum exemptions.

Mr. Rogers stated upwards to \$500,000.

Chairman Shepperd noted that the question then is whether or not the County can afford it.

Mr. Burgett stated this is easier than lowering the tax rate. The County is giving assistance to people who really need it. This amount is so small on the grand scale of things that it helps the people who need it and does not have a great impact on York County's financial health. He stated he would be in favor of going with the maximum exemptions.

Mr. Zaremba indicated it would not hurt to give it more consideration to see if the Board is overlooking something.

Chairman Shepperd stated he feels the sense of the Board is that it wants to increase the exemptions, but there are still questions. He asked Mr. McReynolds how this matter will come back to the Board for action.

Mr. McReynolds stated staff will make some estimates, but it will be difficult because they have no source as to the net worth of people. Staff will look at other communities and do its best to make an estimate. He noted that the last change from \$75,000 to \$100,000 created about a 10 percent increase in participants, but a 50 percent increase in benefits. Mr. McReynolds stated the next program deadline is April, so staff will do its best to have the matter back to the Board in six to eight weeks. A decision will be needed from the Board by the end of December.

#### SECONDARY ROAD PLAN

Mr. Carter provided and reviewed a handout given to the Board members with a tabulation of what is on the County's six-year program at this time, and he discussed the status of each of the projects.

Discussion followed between the Board members, staff, and Mr. David Steele, Resident Engineer, VDOT, concerning the priority of the projects, their costs, and the ever-decreasing amounts of state transportation funds. Also discussed was the Fort Eustis Boulevard project and the fact that it is on the secondary road program as a mechanism to get the project preliminary engineering work to compete for the STP funds.

By consensus there was no direction to change the priority of any of the projects contained in the Six-Year Program as presented to the Board.

Meeting Recessed. At 8:55 p.m. Chairman Shepperd declared a short recess.

Meeting Reconvened. At 9:03 p.m. the meeting was reconvened in open session by order of the Chair.

#### YORKTOWN WAYFINDING PLAN

Mr. McReynolds stated that staff has been working with the National Park Service and others to develop some proposals for a directional and wayfinding system for Yorktown to eliminate some of the sign clutter and make things easier for the citizens and visitors to find their way around the village. At this time he stated staff will cover a number of issues with regard to gateway or destination signs.

Chairman Shepperd asked what staff is expecting from the Board after this briefing.

Mr. McReynolds stated staff is asking for direction as to whether or not they are proceeding in the right direction so that they can move to the next step. Staff needs to know if the Board agrees with the general concept.

Mr. Tim Miller, Miller Graphics, provided the Board members with a brief summary of the handout provided for the meeting and the general information it contained. He stated that improving the wayfinding system for Yorktown is a great customer benefit, and it will increase the appreciation people have for the site and their experience. He then reviewed the objectives of the wayfinding program: ease of navigation; sense of place; reduce wayfinding stress and clutter; and ensure compatibility with existing signage. He spoke about the project evaluation on the existing off-site signage to the site, stating there is a need to improve the current signs. He then reviewed the off-site approaches to Yorktown and where signs need to be placed. He stated that once on-site, there are also other decision nodes within the project. Mr. Miller suggested the development of Yorktown's own identity, and he provided some sample concept logos for Historic Yorktown, stating it gives a unique presence to Yorktown. He stated the character they are trying to create is to add to the colonial period, and they were asking the Board members tonight which options they prefer. He then discussed vehicular directional signs and the requirements for them. He noted that site interior signs can be smaller because they are driving at much slower speeds.

Discussion followed concerning the size of the signs and the size of the printing on the signs, both for exterior and internal signs.

Mr. Miller noted that the project is in three phases, and this is the first. The design phase is the next phase, and he stated a mock-up will be prepared to get the Board's input on the project. He noted they looked at federal highway standards of one inch per 50 feet for roadway signs which is for individuals who have 20/20 vision. Shortening some of the messages may be appropriate, but it is important not to lose the message. The Board's input at this time will be considered in the next phase of the project.

Discussion followed concerning the color of the signs and how they will be made. Also discussed was contact with the National Park Service concerning signs on its property.

Chairman Shepperd suggested that the Historic Yorktown Design Committee be involved in this planning.

Mrs. Noll stated she would like to see a mock-up with the governmental logo, and keep the tourist signs all alike in the soft green. She indicated she would also like to see some mock-ups regarding signs being hung on the lamp posts.

Mr. Zaremba noted that Yorktown has been around since 1691, and he stated he felt it would be bad public relations if the County went with the YH logo. He stated he feels the sample logo that comes closest to what the County currently has and is used to is the oval sample.

Mr. Miller stated the symbol itself should be sensitive to what the Board wants it to be, and noted there is a great deal of possible development for that symbol.

Chairman Shepperd asked when staff needed an answer on this.

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Mr. McReynolds indicated they needed something within the next six weeks to two months for the logo.

Chairman Shepperd asked that Mr. Miller provide more options for the logo.

Mr. Burgett stated a logo should say "That's Yorktown."

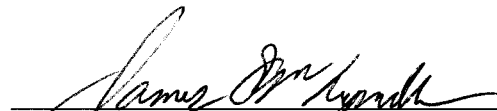
Mr. McReynolds stated he felt the staff had some direction on the logo, and some other alternatives and options will be developed.

Discussion ensued regarding the cost of the signs.

Mr. Miller indicated there was one scheduling issue dealing with the directional sign inserts in the pavers. He noted the pavers need to be placed with the Riverwalk project as it progresses, and this needs to be planned in advance. The signs are inset into the brick pavers, and they can be cast metal or cast concrete.

Chairman Shepperd indicated he did not see the need for the pavers and asked to see some examples.

Meeting Adjourned. At 10:09 p.m. Chairman Shepperd declared the meeting adjourned sine die.



James O. McReynolds, Clerk  
York County Board of Supervisors



Thomas G. Shepperd, Chairman  
York County Board of Supervisors