

MEETING NOTES
York 2040 Committee

Wednesday, February 5, 2020 – 5:00 p.m.
Public Works Multi-Purpose Room
105 Service Drive, Yorktown, Virginia

Members Present: Mark Bellamy, Gregory “Skip” Brooks, Chad Green, Leigh Houghland, Montgoussaint “Montee” E. Jons, Vivian McGettigan, R. Anderson Moberg, Richard Myer, Jacob Rizzio, Eugene Seiter, Cowles “Buddy” Spencer

Staff Present: Susan Kassel, Director of Planning and Development Services; Timothy Cross, AICP, Deputy Director of Planning and Development Services; Earl Anderson, AICP, Senior Planner; Amy Parker, Senior Planner; Daria Linsinbigler, Planning Assistant; Justin Atkins, Assistant County Attorney; Paula Hersh, Public Affairs Manager

Members Absent: Michael S. King, Sheila L. Myers

Call to Order

Vice Chairman Jons called the meeting to order at approximately 5:00 p.m. and welcomed the Committee members and guest speakers. He stated the Chairman King was not able to attend because of illness and he asked everyone to sign a “get well” card that was being passed around.

Approval of January 6, 2020 Meeting Notes

The January 6, 2020 meeting notes were approved unanimously.

Public Facilities, Part 3

Kevin W. Smith, Director of Library Services, gave a presentation on library services in York County. He described the evolution of the public library from its humble beginnings in a farmhouse in 1968, later moving to a rented storefront facility, followed by the construction of the Yorktown Library in 1984 and the Tabb Library in 1999. He stated that although the upper County does not have its own library, a close partnership with the Williamsburg Regional Library system provides service to residents in District One. He said that the County employs 32 full-time equivalent library employees, and the library is open seven days a week. He stated that within the last five years, an outreach program has developed to bring services to retirement communities, schools, preschools, and various County functions. He cited a recent Gallup poll showing that more Americans visited libraries than movie theaters in 2019, and he presented the following statistics for FY 2019:

- Checkouts: 557,764 (416,402 physical, 141,362 digital)
- Registered Patrons: 52, 592
- Patron Visits: 432,344
- Programs: 607
- Program Attendance: 17,091

Mr. Spencer asked if this data included the Williamsburg Regional Library and Mr. Smith replied that it does not but that he could provide Williamsburg data.

Mr. Smith explained that the library is both a physical and virtual place with a strong presence anchored to the community. He noted the philosophy behind the library is people, place, and platform. He stated that the libraries are used not only by young students but also by adults who are furthering their education and use the library for a quiet location to study and have Wi-Fi access. He said that the library is also a platform for civil engagement and that local congressmen, senators, and their staff meet citizens there. He stated that after the holidays, a large number of senior citizens visited the library with new smartphones and tablets for lessons on how to use them.

Mr. Smith spoke about the qualities of a modern library, including access to books, study rooms, classrooms, open spaces, Wi-Fi, and computers. Mr. Anderson asked if businesses utilize the library and Mr. Smith responded that a lot of businesses do not have an actual “brick and mortar” office space, so they use the library for meeting people and using the facilities. Mr. Jons asked what prompted businesses to begin using library space to meet clients and Mr. Smith said that having a public facility and resources for businesses to use is more cost-effective than meeting clients in a hotel lobby and being charged user fees.

Mr. Smith stated that a planned addition to the Yorktown Library, slated to begin construction in August 2020, will roughly double the current space to 22,000 square feet. He reported the new library will have thirteen collaborative spaces which will include meeting rooms, classrooms, a children’s classroom, and an auditorium containing a stage and seating for 100 patrons. Mr. Brooks asked if there have been many organizations located outside of the County requesting to use meeting rooms. Mr. Smith responded that there has been so much interest that the meeting room policy had to be changed to limit usage. Ms. McGettigan asked if the requests are mainly for the Tabb Library, and Mr. Smith replied that both branches receive many requests and if one meeting room is booked, the customer is referred to the other branch. Mr. Smith said that while the library expansion is under construction, a storefront facility will be opened in Patriots Square shopping center to house new books and the rest of the library’s inventory will be placed in storage and will be accessible by request. Mr. Green asked if the same number of books will be housed and Mr. Smith responded that other than culling older books, the same number will be kept. He added that computer access will still be available in the new storefront facility. Mr. Spencer asked if food is allowed in libraries and Mr. Smith responded that the policy has been changed to allow food and drinks.

Mr. Smith reported that a recent library patron survey yielded the following suggestions:

- Better advertising and marketing of library programs and resources
- Expansion of teen programs
- Offer more adult programs
- Have book groups for different age ranges
- Offer streaming of digital movies

He noted that by expanding the library and implementing changes, York County should be able to obtain an “EEE” exemplary rating from the Library of Virginia – the highest attainable mark. He distributed copies of the Library Strategic Plan, which he said addresses core values that incorporates priorities from the Board of Supervisors: access, quality material, community engagement, lifelong learning, and professional development. Mr. Seiter asked if staff receives

local training and Mr. Smith replied staff receives in-house training and that they also attend conferences, seminars, and university classes. Mr. Seiter pointed out that with the large military presence in the area, the library could offer transition programs to help soldiers adjust to the civilian lifestyle.

Mr. Smith said there is a national trend to eliminate fines for overdue materials and that the County is considering making that change. He stated that after looking into which library had more violations (Tabb), he discovered that there are very few patrons from the Lackey area. He said he then realized that access might be a problem for these residents, so a “pop-up” library at Charles Brown Park was initiated with a mobile van providing books and Wi-Fi access. He stated that other future projects include:

- Yorktown Library expansion
- Expansion of outreach services in the Lackey community
- Continuation of the partnership with Williamsburg Regional Library
- Cultural arts programs at the new Yorktown Library
- Partnership with parks and recreation
- Renovation of interior of Tabb Library
- Economic development partnerships
- Exploring the idea of storefront libraries in District 1

Mr. Myer asked if the County partners with the Imagination Library and Mr. Smith responded that there is indeed such a partnership through a local organization called the DeGoode Foundation and that students can register to receive free books. He explained that the DeGoode Foundation brings literacy to impoverished areas in the Hampton Roads region. Mr. Jons stated that citizens in the upper County would like to know what library services are available and often feel isolated from receiving information, and he asked how information is publicized to residents in the Lackey area to tell them about the mobile services available. Mr. Smith responded that he has spoken to ministers to pass out information. Mr. Green suggested that dedicated office space be made available to the Chamber of Commerce and Mr. Smith said that it was a good suggestion for shared space. Mr. Myer noted the synergy between the Tabb Library and the YMCA across the street, which has led to a very successful relationship.

Mr. Smith said that in the distant future, there is potential for a regional library partnership among the York County, Williamsburg, James City, and Poquoson public libraries since customers are shared. He added that such a merger would add more state funding.

James E. Carroll, Ed. D., Chief Operations Officer for the York County School Division (YCSD), gave a presentation on the six-year master plan for school facilities. Dr. Carroll said the average age of the County’s school buildings is fifty years. He stated that there are three things to be balanced when considering future plans: maintenance, renovations, and educational changes. He said that at full build-out, approved residential developments could collectively add as many as 427 elementary students. He said that schools in the upper County currently have more space available than in the lower County. Mr. Jons asked if the plan to build a school at The Marquis has been dropped, and Dr. Carroll responded that for the time being, a school is not needed there. He said that 22.5 students on average per room is the preferred classroom size and that when schools are over capacity, something has to be done to absorb growth or they are forced

to contend with larger classroom sizes. He noted that Bethel Manor was found to be over capacity therefore two portable buildings containing four classrooms were brought in. He said that the lower County elementary schools are full and the effects are starting to be felt, with five schools using portable classrooms. He said the School Division's enrollment projections for fiscal year 2026 indicate that elementary school enrollment will exceed capacity by 658 students in the lower County.

Mr. Houghland asked how long it takes to plan and construct a new school. Dr. Carroll replied that it typically takes one year to plan and one year to construct. Mr. Seiter asked how many schools the County has and Dr. Carroll responded that there are ten elementary schools, four middle schools, four high schools, and the York River Academy. Mr. Spencer asked how future growth is determined. Dr. Carroll said that the Planning Division provides enrollment projections and deferred to Mr. Cross for further explanation. Mr. Cross gave a brief overview of the methodology used to project Average Daily school Membership (ADM), which takes into account new development, birth rates, and historical patterns of year-to-year growth and decline in the different grade levels. Dr. Carroll said he also uses a straight line projection and that past trends are a factor. He noted that it is important to not get too aggressive by building underutilized schools.

Dr. Carroll stated that the strategies for addressing school crowding include portable classrooms, adjusting attendance zones, building additional classrooms, and building new schools. He stated that he and staff are currently discussing the best options to alleviate the overcrowding in the lower County. He said that ideas include establishing a centralized pre-school to free up classroom space in elementary schools, possible expansions, and maximizing temporary classrooms. He noted that a problem with building additional classrooms is the lack of available land. Mr. Seiter commented that many people move to York County because of the schools, and he asked what steps are being taken to maintain the quality of the schools. Dr. Carroll responded that the YCSD focuses on hiring good people to run the schools and utilizes a stringent hiring process that emphasizes hiring experienced teachers from other school divisions. He added that a high-quality professional development program is also important for continuing staff education.

Mr. Rizzio expressed concern about school start times, noting that many schools in the area have changed their start times in accordance with the recommendations of a report published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). He said that teenagers require 8 to 10 hours of sleep per night and that the biological rhythms show they become sleepy later at night and need to sleep later in the morning. He said that having a later start time for classes would greatly benefit student health and ability to learn. He added that several years ago, a report was conducted for the York County School Board that spoke of the benefits of a later start time but that no action was ever taken. Dr. Carroll replied that a medical study and parent input study yielded positive results but that transportation would be problematic. He said after the School Board received all of the data, it decided to table the idea. Mr. Green asked Mr. Rizzio what time his school begins. Mr. Rizzio replied that first block begins at 7:20 am and buses begin picking up students as early as 6:15 am. He added first lunch is at 10 am and the last class ends at 2:05 pm. Mr. Brooks agreed that a later start time would benefit high school students but would adversely affect elementary school students since bus transportation is shared.

Dr. Carroll spoke about the Superintendent's proposed Capital Improvement Program projects for FY21 through FY26, which fall into the following categories:

- New construction
- Renovations/Additions
- HVAC Replacement and energy conservation
- Roof repair and replacement
- Other projects
 - Temporary modular classrooms
 - Replacement of division wide communication system/equipment
 - Construction of stand-alone hubs

Mr. Spencer asked if any senior citizen programs are provided by the school system, and Mr. Anderson replied that the Senior Center covers those types of programs. Mr. Green asked if the Grafton High/Middle School complex is back in operation after the electrical fire on February 3rd, and Dr. Carroll responded that damages have been assessed but an estimate for power restoration is uncertain.

Committee Discussion of Public Facilities

Mr. Brooks stated that he is concerned about continually renovating school buildings that have an average age of fifty years, which he characterized as a "Band-Aid" approach. He said that long-term maintenance should be weighed with a value analysis for a perpetual plan. Mr. Cross responded that a space study will be conducted to evaluate schools as well as the School Board Office, and the bus facility. Mr. Moberg stated schools do not change very much over time and that classrooms are very durable. He said the real changes are integration of gathering spaces and technological innovations. Mr. Myer said that through the Capital Improvement Program, plans are made well in advance for renovations and the budget is used in the most cost-effective way. An example, he stated, is replacing the roof top HVAC unit and roof at the same time. Mr. Moberg noted that an issue challenging schools today is energy efficiency requirements. He said that in the past, the energy code caused buildings to be airtight which caused mold to develop but modern air units have fresh air intake to keep buildings healthier.

Ms. McGettigan said she recently toured the new "Learning Commons" at York High School and was pleased to see it evolve from a concept idea to an actual collaborative space with students working on group projects together behind glass with sound-absorbing chairs. She noted the adaptability of libraries to repurpose space. Mr. Rizzio said that repurposing schools to make more functional for this century, while sustaining the facilities that currently exists allows for adapting as education needs change. Mr. Bellamy stressed the importance of ensuring that the school-age population and enrollment projections in the Comprehensive Plan are consistent. Mr. Cross stated that the school-age population is projected to grow fairly steadily in number but not as a proportion of the total population, and Mr. Anderson added that Dr. Carroll's projections extend only to 2026 while the demographic projections extend through 2040. Mr. Green expressed a preference for keeping the final document general, allowing for fluctuations in the data.

Committee Discussion of Draft Demographic Profile and Projections

Following a five-minute recess, Mr. Cross reported that Vice Chairman Jons was not feeling well and had to leave. He then asked for comments on the draft Demographic Profile and Projections chapter of the Comprehensive Plan, which was distributed to the committee members. Mr. Bellamy suggested that the population ranking of the Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) among MSAs in the United States be included and that the actual number of Peninsula residents who serve in the military be added. Mr. Rizzio suggested noting the percentage of workers who commute into York County in addition to those who commute from the County. Mr. Cross said it would be included in the Economic Development and Transportation elements but that it was not included in the Demographic Profile because it represents a profile of County residents, which does not include those who commute into the County. Mr. Spencer asked about projected growth of the senior population and Mr. Cross responded that the senior population (65 and older) is projected to increase from 12.1% of the total population in 2010 to 16.8% by 2020 and 20.8% by 2030 and then drop to 19.6% in 2040.

Other Business

Mr. Green reported on both the previous evening's joint work session between the Board of Supervisors and the School Board and the annual Board of Supervisors retreat that was held recently. He spoke about the improved spirit of cooperation and open communication between the two boards that has grown over the past few years. He stated that the Board of Supervisors reviewed and made some minor adjustments to its six strategic priorities, which are:

- Exemplary public safety,
- Excellent education opportunities,
- Value-driven economic development,
- Maximize outstanding communications and customer service,
- Environmental stewardship with a focus on resiliency, and
- Quality technology investments.

Mr. Green stated that another topic of its retreat was sea level rise, and he noted the impacts of rising tides and land subsidence. He stated that the HRSD's SWIFT Program to pump highly treated waste water back into the aquifer is expected to slow the effects of subsidence. Ms. McGettigan suggested that the Board be informed of the upcoming committee meeting on sea level rise.

Mr. Cross stated that the next committee meeting will be on March 4th at 5 p.m. He stated that the topic of the meeting will be sea level rise.

Citizen Comment Period

There were no citizen comments.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:23 p.m.