

At a quarterly workshop meeting (Mini Retreat) of the Southampton County Board of Supervisors held at the Workforce Development Center in Franklin, VA on August 9, 2005 at 6:00 PM

SUPERVISORS PRESENT

Dallas O. Jones, Chairman (Drewryville)
Walter L. Young, Jr., Vice-Chairman (Franklin)
Walter D. "Walt" Brown, III (Newsoms)
Anita T. Felts (Jerusalem)
Ronald M. West (Berlin-Ivor)
Moses Wyche (Capron)

SUPERVISORS ABSENT

Carl J. Faison (Boykins-Branchville)

OTHERS PRESENT

Michael W. Johnson, County Administrator
James A. Randolph, Assistant County Administrator
Julia G. Williams, Finance Director
Robert L. Barnett, Building Official
Sandi P. Plyler, Data Processing Manager
Julien W. Johnson, Jr., Public Utilities Director
Hart Council, Public Works Director
Robert Croak, Utilities Systems Supervisor
Carlton Edwards, Chief Utility Systems Operator
Jackie Vick, Maintenance Director
Vernie W. Francis, Jr., Southampton County Sheriff
Wayne M. Cosby, Clerk of the Circuit Court
Eric A. Cooke, Commonwealth's Attorney
Susan H. Wright, County Administration Executive Secretary

Supervisor West gave the invocation at 6:00 PM and dinner and fellowship immediately followed from 6:00 PM – 6:30 PM.

Chairman Jones called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

Mr. Michael Johnson, County Administrator, welcomed everyone, and as requested by the Board of Supervisors at their July 25, 2005 regular meeting, presented a PowerPoint presentation in which the "State of the County" was revisited. He discussed issues on top of them, issues looming, and issues on the horizon.

Issues on top of them were new school construction, growth and development, and land use value taxation. Mr. Johnson shared school enrollment projections, which was part of the basis for the School Board's request for a new Hunterdale Elementary School estimated at a cost of \$16,000,000, a new Capron Elementary School at \$7,400,000, and mobile units for Southampton High School at \$150,000, for a total of \$23,550,000. To fully fund those projects, the estimated equivalent increase in the real estate tax rate would be \$0.10-\$0.12. Regarding growth and development, he shared graphs demonstrating the rising growth trends of Chesapeake, Suffolk, and Isle of Wight from 1960-2003, and cautioned the Board that growth was headed our way. In Southampton County in 2001, there were 49 new single-family dwellings. That number increased to 81 in both 2002 and 2003, and increased to 111 in 2004. New single-family dwellings in 2005 were projected to be 136. As far as lots that had been developed in the County, Regency Estates had 35 lots, Brandywine – 26, Sandy Creek – 85, Bethel Farms – 93, and Woodland Park – 33. He noted that the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors turned down the development of 24 lots associated with Storys Station Estates. Also the development of hundreds of lots associated with the Villages of Southampton was turned down by the Planning Commission and the application was subsequently withdrawn before being heard by the Board of Supervisors. He pointed out that hundreds of lots associated with Forest Lakes/Riverwood would be forthcoming before the Planning Commission and Board. He advised that the following action was being taken to manage growth and development: 1) Ordinance adopted 2/28/05 limiting the number of lot divisions in agricultural zoning districts, 2) Work of the Land Development Task Force was ongoing – evaluating sliding scale zoning and cluster subdivisions; and 3) Cash proffer proposals received (6) – interviews scheduled 8/15/05 with recommendation forthcoming on 8/22/05.

Regarding the implementation of land use value taxation, Mr. Johnson shared the following timeline:

June 27, 2005	Ordinance adopted
November 1, 2005	Applications due
June 1, 2006	Land book complete
October 1, 2006	Tax bills mailed
December 5, 2006	Taxes due

Mr. Johnson clarified for Supervisor Brown that cash proffers were voluntary and were not impact fees.

Issues looming were the cost of solid waste collection, a plan for economic development, and infrastructure development. Regarding solid waste, Mr. Johnson advised that the annual volume of solid waste disposed of in Southampton County in 2004 was 18,936 tons. The County led the SPSA communities in the per capita daily generation rate of solid waste with 5.86. SPSA's disposal rate increased from \$47/ton in FY 2005 to \$52/ton in FY 2006. We were now spending close to \$1 million annually just in solid waste disposal. As a result, we were in the process of implementing attended sites. He shared the following information associated with implementing attended sites:

- Physical improvements and cost of operations - \$285,000 annually
 - 7 sites open any given day except Mondays
 - Assumes 12 hours daily use for each site
 - Assumes part-time labor @ \$7.00/hour
- Expected savings from reduction in waste stream - \$300,000
- Currently in discussions with property owners of sites. All leases were due to expire before 2010.

Mr. Johnson clarified for Mr. Eric Cooke, Commonwealth's Attorney, that it was necessary for the County to either obtain ownership of the transfer sites or enter into long-term leases before attended sites could be implemented. This was because physical improvements to the sites would be costly and it would not be fiscally advantageous for the County to go forward with those improvements if there was no assurance that the County would be permitted to operate the sites for an extended period of time.

Regarding a plan for economic development, Mr. Johnson advised that they needed to look at what it takes to be competitive, the organizational structure, and regional collaboration. Ready-to-go sites were needed to attract business and be competitive. Communities needed to have control over the sites, the sites needed to be zoned appropriately, site plans and due diligence completed, infrastructure in place, and there needed to be appropriate site information and maps. Southampton County's only current ready-to-go site was the Southampton Business Park with 65 developable acres. He advised that Southampton County had resolved to join the City of Franklin in **marketing** economic development. He pointed out that the development of the product remained the responsibility of the County. He noted that development costs of the Turner Tract, one of our industrial products, were estimated at \$10.9 million. Appraisals were in progress and negotiations were ongoing. Also a looming issue was infrastructure development. The Courtland Wastewater Treatment Plant would need to be expanded in future years in order to handle growth and development. The design flow was currently 303,000 gallons/day. When capacity reached 90%, we would need to hire a design team, and when it reached 95%, we would need to contract to have the plant expanded.

Issues on the horizon were organizational issues which included a pay and classification plan for staff, staffing levels, and space needs. The County had contracted with Springsted for those services. Also on the horizon were technology issues such as E-Government and Cable TV Access. He commented that it would be a great service to the citizens to enable them to pay their taxes or purchase a decal online.

Mr. Johnson concluded his presentation and asked Mr. James Randolph, Assistant County Administrator, if he would elaborate on sliding scale zoning, which the Task Force was working on.

Mr. Randolph explained that in updating the Comprehensive Plan, growth would be targeted in certain areas, perhaps the Route 460 corridor and areas around the City of Franklin, for example. Once outside of the target areas, the number of lots would be limited. He gave the following example:

<u>Size of Tract (Acres)</u>	<u>Lots Permitted by Ordinance</u>
2 but less than 5	1
5 but less than 15	2
15 but less than 35	3

Supervisor West asked Mr. Johnson what increase in property values was expected due to the assessment? Mr. Johnson replied that he thought property values would be 30% higher on average, which was equivalent to a \$0.20 to \$0.30 tax increase.

There was some discussion by the Supervisors that due to all the things that were on the table right now, they were not going to be able to adjust the tax rate after the reassessment so that the citizens would not feel the equivalent of a \$0.20 to \$0.30 tax increase. Supervisor West stated that he knew they would have to keep most, but hoped they could give back some.

Supervisor West asked Mr. Johnson what he thought they could do about the schools? Mr. Johnson replied that it was incumbent upon the Board of Supervisors to determine what they could afford.

Mr. Vernie Francis, Sheriff, commented that he thought there was a lack of education to the public. The majority of the public was not aware of all the issues currently facing the Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Wayne Cosby, Clerk of the Circuit Court, remarked that the public was starting to wake up and be more mindful.

Supervisor Brown stated that regarding economic development, he thought we were putting the cart before the horse. We could have all the marketing in the world, but if we did not have a product to sell, it was a waste. He was not against the new economic development organization, but the salaries of the personnel were high and we did not have a product to sell. He stated that if we did not get some products to sell and get some business and industry in this County, the tax rate here was just going to continue to go up and Southampton County was going to be encroached upon.

Supervisor West agreed that we did not have anything to sell.

Chairman Jones suggested that regarding the attended transfer sites, perhaps we could implement attended sites at Newsoms and Sedley first, which were the sites that we actually owned, and test it and see how it would actually work.

Supervisor Felts was in favor of that idea.

Mr. Johnson and other Supervisors thought that it would be difficult to test and see how the implementation of attended sites would work until all the sites were attended.

Mr. Cosby asked Mr. Johnson if the Cutchins Farm has been looked at for industrial development? Mr. Johnson replied yes, until last year when the Comprehensive Plan was amended and it was slated for residential development due to all the residential development around it, particularly the residential development of the Darden Farm.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:10 PM.

August 9, 2005

Dallas O. Jones, Chairman

Michael W. Johnson, Clerk