

A SPECIAL JOINT MEETING BETWEEN THE NEW KENT COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AND THE PLANNING COMMISSION WAS HELD ON THE 19TH DAY OF FEBRUARY IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND THIRTEEN IN THE BOARDROOM OF THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING IN NEW KENT, VIRGINIA, AT 6:00 P.M.

IN RE: CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Davis called the meeting to order.

IN RE: ROLL CALL

Thomas W. Evelyn	Present
C. Thomas Tiller, Jr.	Present
James H. Burrell	Present
Ron Stiers	Present
W. R. Davis, Jr.	Present

All members were present.

Planning Commission Chairman Jack Chalmers called that body to order. Commissioners present were Patricia Townsend, Roger Gregory IV, Katherine Butler, Michael B. Lane, Sr., Charna Gregory, Joyce Williams, Jack Chalmers, Edward Pollard, and Howard Gammon.

IN RE: POTENTIAL PLANNING COMMISSION REORGANIZATION

Mr. Davis reported that in order to "head off rumors" regarding a proposed downsizing of New Kent County's Planning Commission ("Commission"), he felt it best for the Board and Commission to meet and discuss the issue. He then called on each of the members of the Board of Supervisors ("Board") to explain their respective positions.

Mr. Evelyn commented that he liked having a planning commissioner from each of his District One precincts, speaking about how they "heard about issues" before he did and how he felt they did a good job, and advised that he would continue to support them.

Mr. Tiller made similar comments, describing the commissioners from District Two as "really good" and talking about how they kept him and each other informed, and he stated he would continue to support having two commissioners from each district.

Mr. Burrell likewise complimented the work of both of the District Three commissioners who were from opposite ends of his "long" district and indicated that he supported keeping the Commission the way it was.

Mr. Stiers remarked that he had no "personal vendetta" when he suggested downsizing, and explained that his observations over the years were that only about half of the Planning Commission provided input, and it was his feeling that if a commissioner was not going to have input or "do the work", then downsizing would be more efficient and save taxpayer money. He provided information on population and planning commission sizes in some adjacent localities, noting that several with larger populations had smaller commissions. He reported that some of New Kent's planning commissioners agreed with him, and he felt that the Commission needed to be smaller and some members needed more training.

Mr. Burrell reflected that population size was not a good measure, as some of those same more populated localities had the same number on their governing bodies as New Kent did.

He spoke about how if it weren't for the hard work of the Commission, the Board would have a lot more work to do.

Mr. Davis commented that he also had two very different precincts in District Five and he liked having a commissioner from each. He admitted that he might not talk to his appointees as often as he should and the Board might not always agree with the Commission's recommendations, but he acknowledged that the Commission did its job, served as a "filter" for the Board, and didn't let "politics or money get in the way" of their decisions. He remarked that both the Board and Commission could "probably do a better job", pointing out that both worked for the citizens of New Kent, and he suggested that perhaps both should rededicate their efforts to be more responsible to those citizens.

Planning Commissioners were then invited to provide their comments.

Commission Chair Chalmers reported that he had been approached "a long time ago" about this issue and although he might have admitted that the work of the commission could probably be done with a smaller group, he did not necessarily agree it was "the smart way to do it". He spoke about how the large number of commissioners had "sometimes gotten in the way" but he admitted that often times he had changed his mind after listening to the input from the other commissioners. He pointed out that the commissioners were "citizen planners" who had a state-offered course available to them, and although they might not be educated in planning, they did have a professional planning staff that provided information and helped them work through the issues. He stated that he felt the Commission did a good job in coming up with consensus recommendations to send to the Board.

Commissioner Lane spoke about how he felt there were two issues, the first being the size of planning commissions in other jurisdictions. He indicated that he had done some research and it appeared that the larger localities that had smaller commissions required more from their commissioners and paid them more. He noted that it was a significant commitment to attend the training course offered to planning commissioners, and was more of a commitment than was required of the Board. He stated that he was proud of the diversity on New Kent's Planning Commission and he felt having a smaller group would impact that diversity and make it harder to "have the pulse of the community". He stated that he felt any savings to the taxpayers would be minimal and not the amount set forth by Mr. Stiers.

Mr. Lane's second point was that any complaint about a particular commissioner should be directed to the Board member who appointed that person, and he did not like the innuendo directed towards the Commission and had taken those comments personally.

Commissioner Pollard advised that he had been personally insulted by some of the comments made, and spoke about how "money shouldn't even be on the table" as he had never received enough money to cover his travel costs to the various meetings he attended, and how he considered it an honor and privilege to represent New Kent. He indicated that he could not believe that "anyone could make a statement like that" or infer that the commissioners were not doing their jobs when there was no substantiation. He then read from *"The Riggins Rules, Suggested Do's And Don'ts for the Conduct of Public Hearings and the Department of Members of Boards Commissions and Other Bodies"*, which addressed attendance, creating a good impression, punctuality, professional dress and decorum, preparation, politeness and impartiality. He concluded by saying that he wanted everyone to know that New Kent had a good planning commission.

Commissioner Townsend commented that she felt that the Commission was a good representation of New Kent, which she did not feel would be the case if there were not a representative from each precinct. She spoke about communication and transparency, and how the Commission tried to give the Board as much information as possible and was often the "lightning rod", taking the brunt of the public comments made, and she suggested that no changes be made. Regarding compensation, she remarked that "you have never paid me enough" but added that she didn't "do it for the money" and that "we are all here because we choose to be here and wanted to make a difference in New Kent".

Mr. Evelyn remarked that he had served on the Commission with most of its current members and had a great deal of respect for them. He noted that although things had been slow of late, it was expected that activity would be picking up and he asked that the commissioners communicate what the Board or staff could do to better help them.

After commenting that it was apparent there would be no changes, Mr. Stiers moved to appoint Richard Kontny, Jr. as a District Four representative to the Planning Commission to serve a four-year term ending December 31, 2016. The members were polled:

Thomas W. Evelyn	Aye
C. Thomas Tiller, Jr.	Aye
James H. Burrell	Aye
Ron Stiers	Aye
W. R. Davis, Jr.	Aye

The motion carried.

IN RE: ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Burrell moved to adjourn the meeting. The members were polled:

C. Thomas Tiller, Jr.	Aye
James H. Burrell	Aye
Ron Stiers	Aye
Thomas W. Evelyn	Aye
W. R. Davis, Jr.	Aye

The motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.