

THE NEW KENT COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS HOSTED A TOWN HALL MEETING ON THE 22nd DAY OF JANUARY IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND FIFTEEN IN THE AUDITORIUM OF NEW KENT HIGH SCHOOL IN NEW KENT, VIRGINIA, AT 6:30 P.M.

IN RE: CALL TO ORDER

Chairman C. Thomas Tiller, Jr. called the meeting to order.

IN RE: INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Tiller gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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.

IN RE: INTRODUCTIONS AND OPENING REMARKS

Mr. Tiller opened the meeting by introducing members of the Board of Supervisors, the County Administrator, the County Attorney and the Deputy Clerk. He thanked those present for their attendance and noted this was the first Town Hall Meeting in many years with all board members present. He encouraged attendees to ask questions and indicated that Supervisors and staff would do their best to answer them. He asked that if at the end of the meeting anyone felt there were questions which had not been answered fully, they please leave their name and phone number or email address and a Supervisor or staff member would contact them to provide more information.

IN RE: BRIEF NEW KENT COUNTY PRESENTATION

County Administrator Rodney Hathaway welcomed everyone and announced he would start the meeting by providing a brief presentation on some of the activities and highlights in the County over the past year. He noted this would be a time for citizens to get to meet the board members as well as various department heads. He added that he believed most departments were represented and then introduced those who were present. Mr. Hathaway reported that County staff, under the direction of the Board of Supervisors, had been very busy in 2014 and that 2015 was expected to be even busier. He noted that there had been many accomplishments and activities in various areas over the past year and that time would allow him to concentrate his comments on only a few of those areas.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Hathaway reported that New Kent had one of the finest sheriffs' offices in the State and the Country and that our Sheriff's Office had recently received four awards recognizing their outstanding performance. He added that he was very proud of our Sheriff's Office and hoped that residents felt safe at night knowing we had such an outstanding department.

He also reported that response times and aging equipment had been an ongoing concern in the area of Fire-Rescue and significant accomplishments had also been made in those areas

over recent years. He indicated that three of the four stations were currently staffed 24/7 and that mutual aid and automatic aid agreements with neighboring localities were being renegotiated. He reported that several fire trucks had been purchased and plans were in the works for a future permanent site for the Lanexa Fire Station which would replace the current leased site. Mr. Hathaway announced that he was extremely proud of the "burn building" fire training facility which would soon be built in the County and would be made possible through grant funding. He indicated that this building would be the first phase of a regional fire training facility.

Mr. Hathaway also announced that the County had worked with the State Insurance Services Office (ISO) over the past year and, as a result, New Kent had received a better ISO rating. Residents were encouraged to check with their insurance agents to see if this rating change would have any impact on their insurance premiums.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Hathaway reported that a recent reorganization had resulted in a merge of the Economic Development Department and the Community Development Department. He indicated that during the time he had served as Economic Development Director and Community Development Director he had noticed that the two departments worked very closely together and believed they would work better under the leadership of one director. He reported that it had been an ongoing focus of the County to encourage new business and that County staff worked closely with new businesses to guide them through the process.

Mr. Hathaway reported that the County was currently working with several new businesses including a Burger King on Rt. 106, a Waffle House on Route 60 and an Advance Auto in the Bottoms Bridge area. He also reported that the County was working with the new owner of Maidstone and was happy to report that construction had begun on the residential component which was extremely important to the success of the project. He indicated that the developer saw reopening the market as a priority and was following a number of leads. Mr. Hathaway also noted that there was some new activity in Preservation Office Park. He reported the Rose and Crown Restaurant was now under new ownership and plans for a spa in the vacant building near the restaurant were in the works.

Mr. Hathaway also reported that there were four bills before the General Assembly aimed at keeping horseracing in Virginia. He indicated that some of the bills were more helpful to New Kent than others and that he was hopeful there would be horseracing in the County this year. He stressed the importance of the ongoing operation of Colonial Downs.

Mr. Hathaway announced that Matt Smolnik, who had recently been hired as the Director of Community Development, was working to develop an expedited plan for moving prospective businesses through the review process. The hope was that by being able to get businesses up and running quicker, we could potentially attract more businesses to the County.

Mr. Hathaway also reported that there was much activity on Rt. 106 south of I64. The Pilot Truck Stop had recently been granted a CUP to continue operation; Wilco Hess had received approval to build a second truck stop and a third truck stop company had also expressed an interest in the area.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Mr. Hathaway reported that the County had fifty-five acres of land on Pine Fork Road for the development of a new park facility. He announced this park would be a multipurpose facility with ball fields and walking trails in the first phase and an indoor facility in the second

phase. He indicated that the County had a number of very strong youth organizations which were growing rapidly and it was important to keep up with the demand for field space.

CAPITAL PROJECTS

Mr. Hathaway provided an update on the Historic School renovation project. He indicated that the building had originally been constructed in 1930 with a number of expansions over the years. He reported that the original plan had been to renovate the school for use as a school facility. It had since been determined this not be the best use for the facility at this time. He stressed that regardless of how the facility would be used or who would move in, it was necessary to preserve the structure. Renovation of the east wing was near completion and the Bridging Communities Career and Technical School was now in its second year of operating in the back section of that wing.

Mr. Hathaway reported that the County had been in contract negotiations with a consortium composed of York County, James City County and Gloucester County to become a part of a regional radio system. He indicated that the County recognized the new system was needed and they hoped to move forward with this project soon. Estimated cost was \$6.7 million and would include four towers and provide radio coverage for 95% of the County. This system would not only benefit the Sheriff's Office and Fire-Rescue but would also be a big benefit to schools. Mr. Hathaway reported that the County's current radio system provided only 60% coverage and that school buses were transporting students into areas with little or no coverage.

COSBY MILL ROAD

Mr. Hathaway provided an update on the bridge construction project on Cosby Mill Road. He indicated that the County realized the huge inconvenience this construction was having on many residents who were now finding it necessary to use alternate routes. He reported it had been discovered early last year that the culvert under the bridge had failed and needed to be replaced. He also reported there had been several delays in the project which had been caused by the need to relocate utilities, a high water table and bad weather. When complete, the new construction should last fifty years.

Mr. Evelyn noted this project was in his district and he had been providing weekly status updates. He asked anyone wishing to receive these updates to please email him to be added to his list. He also reported updates were being provided in the New Kent Charles City Chronicle. The last project update indicated the road should be open to traffic in late February or early March.

ROUTE 249 AND ROUTE 612 ROUNDABOUT

Mr. Hathaway reported construction on a roundabout at the Route 249 and Route 612 intersection was scheduled to begin on February 23rd with an expected completion date of November 4th. Traffic would be limited to one lane during most of this project and backups should be expected. Mr. Hathaway indicated this intersection had been a huge safety concern and the roundabout was being constructed to alleviate some of the issues with this interchange.

Mr. Evelyn reported the County had moved some funds from other projects to be able to focus on the immediate needs at Route 249 and Route 612.

IN RE: QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Mr. Hathaway opened the floor for questions.

QUESTION/COMMENT: While we welcome retail business, are there any larger projects in the works? How many full-time and part-time employees does the County have going out to try and sell the County?

Mr. Hathaway reported the County had an Economic Development Team composed of Director of Community Development Matt Smolnik, a part-time consultant and the County Administrator. Mr. Hathaway also noted economic development was not a quick process and New Kent was relatively new to the game having only established the Economic Development Department in 2009. He reported the first economic development efforts had begun in 2004 when the Board of Supervisors made the decision to run water to Bottoms Bridge and they had since expanded this service to other parts of the County. A big focus had been on infrastructure. He indicated land was available close to the interstate exits and being located between Williamsburg and Richmond was a plus. The County was also running commercials on Channel 12 in an effort to attract businesses. Mr. Hathaway reported the County was currently working on several projects which could not be announced at this time and there was much activity behind the scenes.

QUESTION/COMMENT: If the County hopes to grow commercially, residentially and educationally, the broadband service needs to be expanded. What's being done to expand broadband?

Mr. Hathaway indicated this was something the County had been considering. He noted County residents currently had access to broadband through Cox and Verizon DSL. Fiber optic service was being provided in key locations for business use and was not currently available for residential customers.

Mr. Evelyn reported New Kent County Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Dave Myers was focused on a one-to-one computer initiative to make internet access more available to students. He added that the County continued to work with Delegate Chris Peace and Senator Tommy Norment to bring better service to our residents.

Mr. Hathaway indicated the new radio project could possibly present some opportunities to provide wireless broadband in the County. King and Queen County had received stimulus funding which had been used to provide wireless broadband service. He indicated that although New Kent had also received stimulus funding, those funds had been used in other areas.

QUESTION/COMMENT: What can we do when we have ongoing problems with Cox phone and internet service?

Mr. Hathaway noted the County had a liaison with Cox and staff would be happy to provide contact information for that individual.

QUESTION/COMMENT: Do you have a liaison for Verizon?

Mr. Hathaway indicated that in addition to Cox, liaisons were also available for Verizon and Dominion Power.

Mr. Davis suggested the County should consider sending out a survey asking residents what they would be willing to pay for broadband service. He noted the base price in King and

Queen was about \$30.00 and a private company was providing the service using towers owned by King and Queen. He suggested the County could put a request in the Chronicle and the Tidewater Review asking citizens to let the Supervisors know their needs and what they would be willing to pay.

Mr. Hathaway noted this was a good idea and suggested that a feasibility study, which would allow very detailed questions to be asked of the citizens, should be conducted first.

Mr. Evelyn suggested if service could be purchased for \$30.00, most citizens would be willing to pay that amount. He indicated he felt time and money would be wasted on a survey.

Mr. Hathaway noted the county had received a \$50,000 grant to do a study on the Route 106 corridor.

QUESTION/COMMENT: You can't just think about a corridor. You need to think about where people run their businesses. More and more people are working out of their homes.

Mr. Hathaway noted there was a tremendous cost associated with providing broadband. He cited a recent project in Charles City which had cost approximately \$1,000,000 to provide service to a four-mile area.

QUESTION/COMMENT: Is anything being done to stimulate growth in the Arbors section of Viniterra?

Mr. Evelyn reported he had met with Viniterra earlier in the day and they needed more residential development before moving forward with plans for commercial development. He indicated one million square feet had been designated for commercial space and a pavilion and a club house were in the plans. Mr. Evelyn also reported some County Ordinances had been changed in an effort to stimulate growth in the County.

Mr. Burrell noted new construction seemed to be the trend across the Country and it should be seen in New Kent soon.

Mr. Hathaway noted there were currently two contractors with agreements for construction in the Arbors.

QUESTION/COMMENT: There doesn't seem to be much in the area of 55 and up residential property in the County.

Mr. Davis indicated there were 1,500 55 and up units approved in The Four Seasons.

Mr. Hathaway reported plans were for ninety more units to be built in The Four Seasons this year.

QUESTION/COMMENT: Have any other areas in the County been considered for 55 and up?

Mr. Evelyn indicated that Rock Creek Villas was also a 55 and up age-restricted community.

QUESTION/COMMENT: Details on Route 106 and the Pilot Station area were requested.

Mr. Hathaway indicated this area, which contained a number of parcels available for economic development, was a huge focus for the County. He reported that Wilco Hess, who had been approved to build a truck stop in the area, had recently been purchased by

Marathon Gas and he was not sure if this sale would have any impact on the project. He also reported that Love's Travel Stops had expressed an interest in building in the area. He added that the County also owned approximately 150 acres in the area.

QUESTION/COMMENT: A resident expressed concerns regarding Colonial Downs' ability to pay taxes.

Mr. Hathaway indicated the County was bound by Code to treat all owners the same and that collecting taxes from all owners was a priority. He reported there had been many comments made regarding why the County had not stepped in to save Colonial Downs and why more had not been done. He indicated the County had been involved in a number of meetings regarding Colonial Downs and the facts were there was little the County could do.

Mr. Stiers reported Colonial Downs had a new president out of Louisiana and that he would be setting up a meeting with him in the next few weeks. He indicated he believed the new president would be easier to work with.

QUESTION/COMMENT: Does he have any impact on the General Assembly?

Mr. Stiers indicated he felt the new president would have a great deal of impact on the General Assembly.

QUESTION/COMMENT: Does he understand the ripple effect of closing Colonial Downs?

Mr. Stiers indicated he believed the new president did understand the ripple effect on the County and he believed him to be more concerned about the impact than the previous president had been.

Mr. Evelyn reminded everyone that Colonial Downs had no license to operate a horse track and the loss of this license had resulted in a \$400,000 loss in revenue to the County last year. He also reported County Attorney Michelle Gowdy had been at the General Assembly earlier for discussions regarding Colonial Downs.

Ms. Gowdy indicated the division of purse money was a key difference in the various bills before the General Assembly. She added it had always been the County's position to support what would most benefit the County. She indicated the General Assembly needed to decide where the purse money would go and that she believed they would find something in the middle that would make both sides happy.

QUESTION/COMMENT: A citizen raised the question of when a new school would be built.

Mr. Hathaway reported that the Superintendent of Schools was currently conducting a study focused on determining where the growth would be in the next five to ten years. School enrollment data and several other factors were being studied to be sure that funding would be focused in the right areas.

QUESTION/COMMENT: A citizen asked about funding for a future school project.

Mr. Hathaway reported that the Board of Supervisors had voted several years ago to set aside two cents of the real estate assessment solely for schools and school renovation. The question was what type of school and where should it be built. The Superintendent's study would help answer those questions.

Mr. Stiers indicated that he did not realize the two cent set aside was solely for schools.

Mr. Hathaway reported that the Supervisors had been considering the possibility of diverting one cent of the two cent set aside toward the radio project. He indicated that this was a joint project that would benefit not only the County but also the schools and, as such, would be a proper use of these funds.

Mr. Stiers added the radio project would benefit everyone in the County and the Board had decided that it would be better to take one penny from the fund to get the project completed.

Mr. Evelyn reported the Supervisors had worked with the School Board several years ago to renovate the Historic School for use as an elementary school and the School Board had since decided they no longer wished to pursue this route. He also reported the School Board was aware that the Supervisors were considering diverting one cent to the radio project and they recognized the importance of the project and were on board with plans for these funds.

QUESTION/COMMENT: A citizen, noting the increase in the number of retired individuals and children in the County, asked if there had been any consideration given to the possibility of an "Urgent Care" type facility.

Mr. Hathaway indicated this had been the topic of many discussions and was currently a focus area.

Mr. Evelyn reminded everyone that New Kent had to compete with other localities in regard to attracting businesses. He noted the County was in a very desirable location between two metropolitan areas but was not able to offer what some of the other localities could offer and was not able to spend millions to attract business.

Mr. Burrell noted it was just a matter of time for businesses to come to New Kent. He added that although the County had "wined and dined" many big corporations over the years, New Kent had often been passed over for other localities. He cited Cabela's, which had considered New Kent several years ago and was now planning to build in western Henrico County, as an example.

Mr. Hathaway noted New Kent had been the first Virginia site that Cabela's had considered. He also reported New Kent had been on the "short list" for Phillip Morris and Capital One. He added that New Kent had also been on the "short list" for several other businesses and, as Mr. Burrell had suggested, it was only a matter of time for business to come to New Kent.

Mr. Hathaway thanked attendees for their presence. He noted it was good to see so many residents engaged and involved. He stressed the importance of feedback from citizens and added that with more feedback, the County could make better decisions and better serve its citizens. He indicated he had an open door policy and encouraged citizens to feel free to call him if needed.

Mr. Davis encouraged citizens to consider signing up for New Kent University which was a citizen education program offered annually to County residents free of charge. He indicated this was a ten-week program meeting once a week for approximately two hours and it provided citizens with a wonderful opportunity to learn more about New Kent County government operations.

QUESTION/COMMENT: Citizens asked about times and a course outline for this program.

Mr. Hathaway indicated the program had been offered in the afternoons for the past few years and that staff were considering moving the sessions back to the evening this year. A list of topics to be covered could be obtained by contacting the County Administration Office.

Mr. Stiers reminded business owners that the Board had taken action in October to change the due date for business license renewals from March 1st to May 1st. He noted this later date should make it easier for business owners to provide more accurate information when filing.

QUESTION/COMMENT: A citizen asked how they could find out about future meetings.

It was noted information on meetings such as this could be found on the County website and this was the first Town Hall Meeting the Supervisors had held in some time. Mr. Stiers offered his apologies indicating the meeting had been advertised but had not been published in local newspapers.

Parks and Recreation Director Kim Turner suggested citizens go to the "Notify Me" section of the County website and sign up to receive notifications on upcoming events. Information Technology Director Jonathan Stanger added that "Notify Me" could be found on the left side of the County website home page and citizens could pick and choose from a variety of topics on which to receive notifications.

Mr. Evelyn reported he had held two or three Town Hall Meetings for his district and that those were also listed on the County website as well as in the local paper.

Mr. Burrell indicated the Board had held Town Hall Meetings at Colonial Downs on several occasions. He stressed the importance of receiving citizen input so the Board would be able to function better. He also reminded citizens the deadline for applying for elderly and disabled tax relief would be May 1st.

IN RE: ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Tiller thanked everyone for attending and announced that the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Supervisors would be held at 6:00 p.m. on February 9, 2015, and the next work session would be at 9:00 a.m. on January 28, 2015. Both meetings would be held in the Boardroom of the County Admin Building.

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

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

The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 7:58 p.m.