

Wicomico County Council
Open Work Session
June 17, 2014

Work sessions require written minutes that reflect each item that the public body considered, the action that the public body took on each item and each vote that was recorded. **It should be noted that at work sessions, the Wicomico County Council does not take formal action, nor is a vote taken on any item discussed.**

In attendance: Matt Holloway, President; John B. Hall, Vice President; Bob Culver, Sheree Sample-Hughes, Stevie Prettyman, Gail M. Bartkovich and Joe Holloway.

Present: Matthew E. Creamer, Council Administrator; Edgar A. Baker, Jr., County Attorney; Maureen Howarth, Deputy County Attorney and Melissa Holland, Recording Secretary.

Mr. Wayne Strausburg, Director of Administration; Jack Lenox, Director of Planning and Zoning and Gary Mackes, Director of Recreation, Parks and Tourism were also in attendance.

Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan Update:

Gary Mackes, Director of Recreation, Parks and Tourism came before Council and Jack Lenox, Director of Planning and Zoning came before Council. Mr. Mackes said this is the fifth land preservation plan that Wicomico County has done and is required by the State of Maryland to be eligible for Program Open Space Funds. He said that they contracted with a consultant who has done all of the other plans as well. He said the plan cost \$15,000 this time however in the past the plan cost \$60,000. Mr. Mackes said all of the county's needs are evaluated including all municipalities as well as anyone who has a stake in recreation. He said it involved the Natural Resources Conversation Advisory Committee as well. He said this is a non-binding document and any recommendations are only advisory. Mr. Mackes said the plan gets into the demographics of the community. He said, for example, that Mardela Springs and Hebron have different interests than Salisbury and it is important to break down the county into demographics based on needs and interests. Mr. Mackes said only 14% of the land area of Wicomico County is developed. He said this is a great document to show where Wicomico County wants to go in the future and said it shows what soils are suitable and which lands will perk. He said it breaks down the activities from biking, water access as well as equestrian activities. Mr. Mackes said Wicomico County is the last county to turn in this document. Mr. Lenox said this plan as well as the Comprehensive Plan has gone hand in hand.

Mrs. Sample-Hughes asked about the expansion of Henry Parker Athletic Field to which Mr. Mackes said four more baseball fields and soccer fields would be built with this proposal. Mr. Culver asked what affect the adoption of the tier map will have on this plan. Mr. Lenox said it is not required to adopt the tier map however, which ever option the Council or Executive chooses, the Council's hands are not tied. He said the land

use portion of the comprehensive plan and this plan is consistent with one another. He said if the Council decides how they will limit development based on septic systems is up to the county. Mrs. Prettyman asked how many farms are in the county of 50 or more acres. Mrs. Prettyman said she was looking at the goals and they are lofty and she was a little confused. She said one is to consider the possibility of a skate park to which Mr. Mackes said the City of Salisbury is doing that now. She said develop an educational process for elected officials, real estate professionals and residents to explain the benefits of a transfer development rights program. Mr. Mackes said they are only recommendations. Mrs. Prettyman said another goal is to develop alternative methods of compensation for easements. Mrs. Prettyman said the comprehensive plan is a blue print of the county and if it is not followed there are some programs that won't be funded. Mr. Mackes said the county can pick and choose what they wish to do the plan and it is a resource to go back and look at in the future. Mrs. Bartkovich said the plan discusses a 2012 plan update which the plan states and Mr. Mackes said that is an earlier draft and will be changed. She also said a bullet is repeated and that this plan needs to be proofed.

Mrs. Sample-Hughes asked about great infrastructure and the effects of the sea level and said it recommends a study of the implications of the sea level and asked if there is a time line and education to the public. Mr. Lenox said a lot of discussion about the science is going on and they want the decisions to be fact based. He said that one of the things that are going to come to the county will be the new flood maps which FEMA is putting out. He said they try to incorporate the issue of sea level rise and said they are constantly re-evaluating their own science where the flood elevation is. Mr. Lenox said they will have to evaluate how this will apply. He said if the flood line doesn't change the requirements will become more stringent and the rates will be in some situations cost prohibitive. Mrs. Bartkovich asked if the number of lands that are currently preserved is correct to which Mr. Lenox said it is correct.

Mr. Matt Holloway asked what the time line is to which Mr. Mackes said two projects are going to the Board of Public Works for approval tomorrow and he is worried those projects as well as other projects may be held. Mrs. Sample-Hughes asked Mr. Mackes if he needs a letter to state the Council will have on the agenda on July 15, 2014 to which Mr. Mackes said he will relay the information. Mr. Matt Holloway said it can be placed on the next agenda for July 1st and pulled if necessary. Mr. Mackes said if the Council has any questions to please email him.

Impact Fee Discussion :

Jack Lenox, Director of Planning and Zoning; Andrew Mackel, Director of Finance and Wayne Strausburg, Director of Administration came before Council. Mr. Mackel said the Law Department as well as himself and Mr. Lenox have come up with a plan. He said the county is going to do an incentive grant so the impact fees still exist but there is a grant to offset the Impact Fee. Mr. Mackel said the impact fee must be paid when getting a building permit. He said 74 grants can be awarded in 2015 fiscal year. He said the home must be constructed and code ready for occupancy within a designated period of time which needs to be determined. Mr. Culver said if a person is building homes to sell on the market then 12 months is a reasonable number however if a private

homebuilder builds a home 12 months may not be enough.

Mr. Creamer suggested existing lots of record with current approval from the Health Department for well and septic. Mr. Joe Holloway said some lots people don't make them lots of record and they are already approved for septic and feels that would cut a lot of people out. Mr. Lenox said there are lots approved that owners have chosen not to put on record. Mr. Culver said the Health Department has to approve before a building permit is given. Mr. Creamer said a build-able lot needs to be defined.

Mr. Culver said this needs to be as simple as possible. Mr. Mackel said 18 months will give the builders a full building season. Mr. Joe Holloway feels that 2-3 years is a more reasonable time to which Mrs. Prettyman said that defeats the purpose of the grant to stimulate jobs. Mr. Mackel said criteria are needed for completion as well and Mr. Lenox said it includes the cities and towns. Mr. Mackel said completion could be the sale of a property or a certificate of occupancy. Mr. Culver said the builder may not sell the homes right away. Mr. Strausburg asked if this is intended for local builders or anyone. Mr. Culver asked if they can be required to be a resident of Wicomico County or have a license in Wicomico County. Mr. Baker said it could say "local builder" and then define local builder. He said the county doesn't want to get into the subs. Mr. Baker said this is a grant program for economic development. Mr. Strausburg said there should be a mechanism on the number of permits one person can get. Mrs. Prettyman said then only give the developer a one time grant of five houses. Mr. Culver does not agree to just giving them one grant for five houses if they are able to build more. Mr. Strausburg said if a person wants to come in for another grant then they have to be at a certain point in the houses they previously got grants for.

Mr. Mackel is suggesting the county give the builder a conditional loan. He said as they meet the condition which is being determined at some stage of construction the loan is then forgiven. He said they would apply, be given a two party check with Wicomico County and the builder on it, the builder would take the check to Planning and Zoning and Planning and Zoning takes it back to Finance. Mr. Baker asked if the building code had timeframes for building and inspections to which it is complete within a year but extensions have been granted. Mr. Baker said they should look at the building code to see if that timeframe is reasonable for this as well. Mr. Strausburg asked if the fund can carry over from one budget year to the next to which Mr. Mackel said the loan does but only one year to issue 74 loans. Mrs. Prettyman asked what happens if the new Council chooses to end the program in January. Mr. Mackel said the program will end on June 30, 2015 or when the funds are encumbered. Mr. Creamer and Mrs. Prettyman said a new Council could terminate the program.

Mr. Mackel said if they fail to meet the criteria it would become a lien on the real property and it is paid with taxes or becomes eligible for tax sale. Mr. Culver asked at what point a builder obtain another permit to which Mr. Matt Holloway asked if substantial completion could be a definition to which Mr. Lenox will check with the building inspectors. Mr. Culver will also speak to several builders and get their thoughts. Mr. Joe Holloway asked how the county will preclude a major builder from obtaining the grants. Mr. Culver said he thought a Wicomico County citizen or someone who holds a

business license in Wicomico County. Mrs. Prettyman asked if a person has a vacant lot and a person decides to build when the lot is assessed. Mr. Culver said six months after the house has been built and said they go by the building permit.

Mr. John Groutt said unintended consequences sometimes occur. He asked if these are only for single family homes to which Council said they are. Mr. Groutt asked what would prevent a person from getting ten permits for modular homes to which Mr. Joe Holloway said it is limited to the approval of lots. Mr. Lenox said modular's meet the building codes and pay an impact fee. Mrs. Prettyman said this is to create jobs and they have excluded modular homes. Mr. Culver said he disagrees about excluding modular homes. He said they still have people work for them and he does not want to limit it to stick built homes. He said there are trades involved in a modular home as well. Mr. Lenox said the distinction is manufactured homes which are made on a chassis and they pay an impact fee but not creating jobs in Wicomico County. Mr. Groutt said a new development could occur instantly with modular homes. Mr. Groutt asked if there is a need for these and is there any way that these homes could be limited to the areas where there is water and sewer and said it would help people build where growth should be and will still create jobs. He asked the Council to consider that. A draft will be sent to the Council.

Board of Education:

Dr. Margo Handy, Dr. Cathy Townsend, Dr. John Fredericksen, and Mr. Ronald Willey came before Council.

Security measures that were taken since the incident at Parkside High School: Mr. Micah Stauffer, Principal at Parkside; Jessica Hill, Deputy at Parkside; and Mr. Andy Turner, Coordinator for Safe Schools; as well as Brian Foret, Director of Facilities came before Council. Mrs. Sample-Hughes asked if any security measures would be taken for the upcoming school year and what upgrades are being done and specifically for high schools. Mr. Foret said the implementation began last year and all of the level 1 and 2 have been completed in all of the schools. He said all schools have intercom, remote latch systems and FOB access control. He said the next level 3 is securing vestibules and said that two schools are done and five are in process at this time to be completed over the summer. He said there will be 15 of the schools fit out for vestibule access. Mr. Foret said the closed circuit television systems are being upgraded. He said there are 805 cameras in the school system and in the last 60 days 17 cameras have been added to Wicomico High School and in progress of the last two which will give Wicomico High School 41 closed circuit cameras. He said that Parkside will receive 8 more cameras to make a total of 72 cameras. He said that Delmar will be adding 2 more and Pittsville 14 more cameras. Mr. Foret said they are going to look at the schools that have less than 12 cameras to see what can be done. Mrs. Bartkovich asked who monitors the video cameras. Mr. Foret said administration has access to the cameras and the monitors are in the school offices. He said it is not a surveillance system where there is constant monitoring as it is constantly rotating and the videos are available. Mr. Turner said it is used for forensics as they don't want the children to think they are constantly watching but use for after the fact issues if there are any.

Dr. Handy said the equipment is only as good as the humans behind it and said that unfortunately the Board doesn't have enough funding to have people monitoring the cameras constantly. She said central office also has access to the cameras and said that is mostly after the fact and they go back to the camera and videos to see if something occurred. She said that yearly they go to the schools and see if cameras could be placed in the correct place to prevent blind spots. Mrs. Sample-Hughes asked about East Salisbury's 5th grade wing and Mr. Foret said they have worked with the Principal and have completed the vestibule project but is not sure about the 5th grade wing. Mr. Hall asked how many cameras are needed to which Mr. Foret said it depends on how many is needed and the funding available. Mr. Hall asked about Bennett Senior High to which Mr. Foret said they are camera rich due to the new school. Mr. Joe Holloway asked how much the cameras cost to which Mr. Foret said depending on the camera they normally cost \$1,000 each.

Mrs. Prettyman asked for an update on Bennett Middle School. Mr. Foret said it is on schedule; however, they are still planning on the August 2015 opening. He said once the new facility is complete they will finish the relocation of occupants and supplies from the old school to the new school and will de-commission the old school which is abatement work and demolition. He said the final phase is the James M. Bennett Athletic fields. Mrs. Prettyman asked the cost of the athletic fields to which Mr. Foret said it has a football field practice area, upgraded bleachers and additional practice fields for field hockey, soccer and football. Mr. Foret said the plan has not deviated since the beginning of the project.

Mrs. Sample-Hughes asked if another School Resource Officer will be placed at Parkside High School due to the Career Technology and the other part of the school. Mr. Stauffer said there is only one School Resource Officer and they are responsible for both parts of the school.

Mr. Hall thanked the Board for partnering with Recreation and Parks for after school programs. Mr. Hall asked if the Magnet Program issues have been resolved. Dr. Fredericksen said they had their most recent meeting last evening and will be discussing it tomorrow at 11:00 a.m. He said there are several questions, such as, is it in one site or two sites. He said space is tight at Pemberton and loose for space at North Salisbury. He said cooperation and collaboration is very important and having them in one place makes it much easier. He said that with Magnet in the building it lowers the Free and Reduced Meals at a low average and the Title I program can't be operated without the funding and will affect the Judy Center as well. He said they can import students that receive free and reduced meals or reduce the number of students in the building on a voluntary program that can be placed anywhere. He said if they take 3rd and 4th out of the building it gives a 2% margin between the building free and reduced rates and the county average free and reduced meals rate. Dr. Fredericksen said they can't lose the Title I funding. He said a final decision has not been made. He said there are four standards for Magnet: Do well on verbal and non-verbal test; SRI scholastic reading inventory test; and math benchmark and they have to be in the top 15% in three of the four tests and the top 20% in the last test. Dr. Fredericksen said anybody can take advanced colleges in high school and if pass a college will accept for

credit.

Mr. Willey thanked the Council from the Board for the additional \$90,000 which the Council gave to the Board of Education. Mrs. Sample-Hughes asked how many carts will be attained with the \$90,000. Dr. Fredericksen said the goal is to spend more money than that on the carts but said \$90,000 will buy 64 carts with Ipad's or laptops if they come in traditional carts, but they have some leftover carts and will be able to buy 128 Ipad's if they don't have to buy a cart. He said that will equal 8 carts total.

Open Work Session Adjourned.