

Village Center Board

Minutes of the meeting on September 6, 2007

Village Summary

12 represented by Members

1 represented by Alternate

6 absent (Bruceville, Copperville, Ivy Town, Longwoods, McDaniel, Skipton)

3 vacant (Bar Neck, Neavitt, Wye Mills)

Members Present

Jacqueline Greene; Janet Hammed; Kirke Harper; Howard Callahan; Gary Crawford;
Frank Cavanaugh; Allan Fox; Merton Jarboe; Mary Ann Schmidt; Rachel Papkin;
Harriette Lowery; Elizabeth Thomas-Simoncini

Alternates Present

Janice Pifer (Fairbank); Jacqueline Wheatley (Williamsburg)

1. **Minutes** for the June 7, 2007 meeting approved as amended.
2. **Contact List** Mr. Crawford circulated the VCB Contact List for updates.
3. **Welcome** Mr. Cavanaugh welcomed new Members Mr. Harper (Claiborne) and Ms. Thomas-Simoncini (Wittman); Alternate Janice Pifer (Fairbank).
Mr. Cavanaugh welcomed guests Councilman Dirck Bartlett, County Manager Andy Hollis, and County Planner George Kinney.

4. **Report by Mr. Kinney**

Mr. Kinney reported on the status of village master planning. He said the decision to do "VMP" without outside consultants will necessitate re-arranging current duties within the Office of Planning and Zoning and designating someone to head up the VMP effort. Unfortunately, there have been several setbacks already.

- The P&Z workload in the coming year is heavy, with a major rewrite of zoning ordinances (primarily for agricultural zones) on the docket.
- Two unfunded State mandates (re Priority Preservation and Water Resources) have been added to P&Z's already full workload
- One P&Z planner has resigned
- Efforts to recruit a new planner have been unsuccessful.

However, he assured the Board that VMP will go forward. When asked for an estimated start-date, he was unable to provide one. A general discussion followed this report. Some of the points raised include:

- Has the sequence of villages been decided? The Council has not discussed it.
- What criteria will be used to decide that sequence? No criteria have been discussed, but attention will focus first on villages most vulnerable to development, such as Longwoods.
- What should the Board do in the meantime? No clear answer.

--Should villages get started with VMP on their own? Mr. Kinney thought it might be worthwhile. He thought some master plan "template" could be used, but he did not say where such a template could be obtained. Mr. Crawford expressed concern that digging into planning issues without a skilled facilitator present could lead to discord. Ms. Papkin warned about raising issues before we are fully ready to deal with them.

--Mr. Harper asked if the County had a list of volunteer professional facilitators who might be asked to help. Mr. Hollis said he would check into it.

--Is there some other, less time-consuming approach, than the village-by-village approach originally envisioned? No response. Mr. Crawford wondered if, when the new planner finally is aboard, at least one round of introductory meetings might be held in every village. No response.

--Should villagers who are concerned about the need for VMP express their concern to the Council? Yes, Mr. Bartlett noted that information is always helpful to the Council. Ms. Hammed disagreed, saying the P&Z staff were the experts, doing a fine job, and we should not be interfering with them. Mr. Bartlett countered by saying that support from the Council would be helpful to Mr. Kinney and his staff, pointing out that some Councilmen may be less supportive on the subject of village master planning than he is.

5. Village Issues

Ms. Greene reported that the Bellevue community's traditional access to the water remains blocked by a private property owner. She noted that this property is now for sale. Mr. Bartlett was given a short briefing on that situation.

6. Officers Election

Mr. Cavanaugh reminded Members that the annual election of VCB Officers is due at the next meeting.

7. Next Meeting

Mr. Cavanaugh said he would contact the Eastern Shore Land Conservancy for a possible guest speaker. All VCB Members were asked to make agenda suggestions.

It was proposed and agreed that VCB meetings should begin at 6:30 pm rather than 7:00 pm.

The next meeting was scheduled for October 4, 2007.