

PASQUOTANK COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA
AUGUST 1, 2022

The Pasquotank County Board of Commissioners met today in a Work Session on Monday, August 1, 2022 in Courtroom C in the Pasquotank County Courthouse.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Lloyd E. Griffin, III, Chairman (*arrived at 3:30*)
Charles H. Jordan, Vice-Chairman
Cecil Perry
Barry Overman (*arrived at 3:20*)
Jonathan Meads
Sean Lavin

MEMBERS ABSENT: William “Bill” Sterritt

OTHERS PRESENT: Sparty Hammett, County Manager
R. Michael Cox, County Attorney
Shelley Cox, Planning Director
Mike Barclift, NCACC Management Fellow
Lynn Scott, Clerk to the Board

The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chairman Jordan at 3:05 PM.

Vice-Chairman Jordan called on Planning Director Shelley Cox to present. Ms. Cox stated that the County has been working on drafting the first parts of the County’s Land Use Plan, and our consultant has developed a very rough draft plan. She said the Future Land Use Map is probably the most important element of our Future Land Use Plan. The map is what the County uses to guide development over the life of the plan, and it shows how we want to see the County grow.

Ms. Cox said the biggest thing that was taken into consideration with the map was the fact that we are seeing sea level rise occurring. Currently, NOAA is projecting a 2’ sea level rise over the next 50 years in Pasquotank County, which is reflected on the map. Obviously, a house or structure that is built today will most likely still be around in 50 years. We want to make sure that we are protecting property owners, the environment, and ourselves from future climate change occurrences. Most of the County affected will be in the southern portion of the County, along the Albemarle Sound. However, there are other areas in the County that will be affected. Most of the areas are swamps and contributories such as Knobbs Creek and in Newland along the drainage ditch.

Ms. Cox said most of the area in the County is being projected as agricultural and rural. There are also some areas designated as environmental and conservation areas, which includes the desert area. They want to see the farmland within the desert area conserved as much as possible and remain farmland.

Ms. Cox said the consultants are proposing residential development be pushed more toward Elizabeth City, because the City has centralized sewer. The current Land Use Plan has a “golden triangle area”, which is from the 17 Bypass to Elizabeth City’s northern boundaries, along Northside Road almost to Morgan’s Corner where residential development is encouraged. That’s why there are several developments along Main Street Extended.

Ms. Cox said her biggest question for the Board today is, “where do you foresee residential development occurring in the future?” She noted that there are a lot of services that have to be provided for residential development. The draft map really doesn’t show much as far as where future residential development should occur, and she is here this evening to get a sense of where the Board would like to see it happen. She explained that this is not the Zoning Map; it is the Land Use Map. Even if areas are classified for residential, any developer that wants to develop the area would have to come back to the Board and hold a public hearing for a rezoning. But if the Future Land Use Map already classifies an area as residential, then that generally means the Board supports residential there. It is a lot easier to approve a rezoning if the maps are consistent. If the plan is inconsistent with what they are requesting, it can still be approved; it’s just a little more difficult. More discretion and explanation will need to be used as to why you are going away from what the plan projects. It’s not written in stone and it can always be amended. She said the plan will probably be good for ten to fifteen years at the most. It will be

our general guideline for how we are going to see the County developed. When a developer comes to her asking where the County wants to see residential or commercial development, she can use the map to say where it is projected to grow.

She noted that there has been a lot of discussion about the Morgan's Corner area. She stated that it will probably be growing. Obviously, we will see more residential development coming down US 17. The only problem with that is that Morgan's Corner, from an environmental standpoint, has a lot of flooding issues. There is going to be a lot of planning that needs to be done in anticipation of development in that area to prevent future problems with flooding. The more intense development we have, the more flooding issues we will have. She said we need to get ahead of that ball and start planning if that's the area we want to see grow. Not everywhere in Newland will be appropriate for residential development because of its topography.

She said she knows it is a lot to think about, but at this point, the residential piece of this pie is what she needs the Board to consider and focus on.

Ms. Cox explained the focal/enhancement areas on the map. She explained that in late April she met with the Planning Board and the Board of Commissioners and got input. A community survey was performed, which had a decent response. Based on the input from the community survey, a big percentage of the respondents said maintaining the county's rural character was important to them. Most of the respondents said they do not want to see intense residential growth in the County.

Commissioner Perry suggested Harvest Point Road in Weeksville or locations near the Coast Guard Base. Ms. Cox said they discourage residential development close to the Coast Guard Base for a couple of reasons, such as the airport and the Coast Guard Base itself. She said they don't want to land lock the base. There is a plan to reroute Weeksville Road in the future to give the base a little more runway space. The base is very vulnerable to sea rise at their current location and may need to move inland in the future. She wants to make sure that they have the opportunity to move further inland in Pasquotank County.

Ms. Cox said the way the Pasquotank County Subdivision ordinance is set up currently, you cannot do a major subdivision (more than three lots) without getting the Board's approval. It has to go through the major subdivision process. You can do a family subdivision, which is a gift lot to a child, parent, or grandchild, you can do a minor subdivision or expedited subdivision that just requires staff approval (up to three one acre lots and the parent lot has to be at least five acres), and you can do a ten-acre exempt lot (exempt by the state statutes). Recently, developers in the Newland area are using the minor subdivision process and the exempt subdivision process. They are creating hybrid type subdivisions where you will have three one-acre lots on an existing lot, and then you have ten-acre lots behind it or beside it. Those lots do not have any provisions for county water, fire hydrants, streets, etc. A lot of people who buy those lots and build houses on them don't realize what they are getting into until they are into it. The people that buy the houses move in with the expectation that the County is going to provide them certain services that we are not able to provide. Brothers Lane, Sandy Road, Crooked Run Road, and The Pines are good examples.

Commissioner Meads said most people moving to our area do not want to be in the City, they want to be in the County. Citizens moving to the area who are in the Coast Guard would probably prefer to live on the southern end of the County.

Commissioner Lavin said he agrees with a lot of what has been said. People tend to want to move close to the water, and we need to continue to plan for growth in those areas. It's going to be hard to keep people out of the northern and southern ends of the County, because they are attractive.

Commissioner Griffin noted that Creek Road, Scott Drive, Lover's Lane and Halls Creek all flood badly and the LIDAR maps did not show this. There are other areas that are on the flood maps that do not flood, such as Riverside. Ms. Cox said FEMA is now recognizing, to some degree, that flood maps are not always correct. They have adopted a new way of charging for flood insurance. It is supposed to be more tailored to the risk of a particular structure. She thinks FEMA is phasing out those old flood maps, as far as ratings go for flood insurance. It will put a lot more power with the mortgage companies to determine if they are going to require flood insurance or not. The changes are supposed to take place this October.

Chairman Griffin asked if corridor protections are in place. Ms. Cox stated that the map does address that, in that most of the corridors are identified as agricultural/rural. That is one of the things that she is asking for today. She would like more input on where the Board wants to see residential developments go, because right now the map is not pushing residential anywhere in the County. It just identifies areas that have environmental concerns, agricultural areas, and industrial and commercial areas. It doesn't really show where the County wants to see residential development. She said she really needs input from the Board.

Vice-Chairman Jordan said he read an article recently regarding increases in flood insurance. Ms. Cox said the reality is that we are seeing the effects of climate change. We are seeing more frequent storm events and sunny day events. This is causing our flood insurance rates to increase. People living in vulnerable areas are losing their properties.

Ms. Cox said there is a new grant program that is coming out through the state. She said she would like to apply for a grant to create a master drainage plan for Newland, because she believes that is an area that we will see future development.

Vice-Chairman Jordan asked Ms. Cox to provide alternative maps at the September 12th Finance Committee meeting which show suggested areas for residential development. Ms. Cox said that she would do so. Commissioner Overman suggested receiving feedback from the school system. Chairman Griffin asked Ms. Cox to check with Angela Welsh also because some of the Transportation Improvement Plan projects that were on hold are getting ready to move forward.

After the Board provides further guidance on which map is preferred; a public meeting will be scheduled to present the map and solicit input from community members.

There being no further business;

Motion was made by Sean Lavin, seconded by Cecil Perry to adjourn the meeting.
The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 3:55 PM.

CHAIRMAN

CLERK TO THE BOARD