

**Hampton Roads Planning District Commission
Summary Minutes of February 20, 2020**

The February 20, 2020 Meeting of the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission was called to order by the Chair at 12:32 p.m. in the Regional Board Room, 723 Woodlake Drive, Chesapeake, Virginia, with the following in attendance:

Commissioners in Attendance

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Michael Hipple, Chair (JC) | Courtney Doyle (NO) |
| Andria McClellan, Vice-Chair (NO) | Larry Filer (NO) |
| Randy Keaton, Treasurer (IW) | John Rowe (PO) |
| Stephen Best (CH) | Randall Wheeler (PQ) |
| Christopher Price (CH) | William Gillette (SH) |
| Debbie Ritter (CH) | Michael Johnson (SH) |
| Ella Ward (CH) | Sanford Wanner (SM) |
| Barry Cheatham (FR) | T. Carter Williams (SM) |
| Amanda Jarratt (FR) | Robert Dyer (VB)* |
| Phillip Bazzani (GL) | Barbara Henley (VB) |
| Brent Fedors (GL)* | Thomas Leahy (VB)* |
| James Gray (HA) | Guy Tower (VB) |
| Donnie Tuck (HA) | Sabrina Wooten (VB) |
| Scott Stevens (JC) | Andrew Trivette (WM) |
| David Jenkins (NN) | Neil Morgan (YK)* |
| McKinley Price (NN) | Sheila Noll (YK) |
| Cynthia Rohlf (NN) | |

Commissioners Absent:

| | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Robert Geis (CH) | W. Eugene Hunt (PQ) |
| Mary Bunting (HA) | Leroy Bennett (SU) |
| William McCarty (IW) | Patrick Roberts (SU) |
| Kenneth Alexander (NO) | Louis Jones (VB) |
| Mamie Johnson (NO) | Rosemary Wilson (VB) |
| Lydia Pettis-Patton (PO) | Paul Freiling (WM) |

Executive Director:

Robert A. Crum, Jr., Secretary

Other Participants:

Theresa Danaher (CAC)
Brian DeProfio (HA)
Bob Baldwin (PO)

*Late arrival or early departure.

Others Recorded Attending:

Angela Hopkins (NN), Jessica Dennis (NO), Gina Harris (PO), Joashua Schulman (Envision 2020), Robbyn Gayer (Future of Hampton Roads Organization), Alisa Crider and Doug Smith (Hampton Roads Economic Development Alliance), Jeremy Taylor (Hampton Youth Commission), Trevor Metcalfe (Inside Business), Jimmy LaRoue (Suffolk News-Herald), David Wickersham (US Representative Elaine Luria's Office), Citizens: Mark Geduldig-Yatrofsky; Staff: Keith Cannady, Kelli Arledge, Shernita Bethea, Rob Case, Rob Cofield, Katie Cullipher, Rebekah Eastep, Ashley Gordon, Logan Grimm, Greg Grootendorst, Whitney Katchmark, Sara Kidd, Mike Kimbrel, Katie Krueger, Sharon Lawrence, Andrew Margason, Kendall Miller, Cynthia Mulkey, Katherine Rainone, Matt Smith, Joe Turner, Chris Vaigneur, Sheila Wilson

Approval/Modification of Agenda

Chair Michael Hipple asked for modifications or additions to the agenda. Hearing none, he asked for a motion.

Motion: Commissioner McKinley Price Moved to approve the agenda; seconded by Commissioner Sheila Noll. The Motion Carried.

Submitted Public Comments

Chair Hipple noted there were no Submitted Public Comments and continued to the Public Comment period.

Public Comment

Mr. Mark Geduldig-Yatrofsky addressed the Commission urging transparency and full disclosure regarding climate change implications for the region when promoting Hampton Roads.

Transcription of the public comments made orally during Commission meetings will be included with the HRPDC Agenda each month and posted on the HRPDC website when available.

Executive Director's Report

Mr. Robert Crum, HRPDC/HRTPO Executive Director, referenced his enclosed monthly report and briefed the Commission on two particular items of interest:

- Mr. Crum reported that the weekly Hampton Roads Caucus meetings have been well attended this year, and he commended Chair Hipple and Vice-Chair Andria McClellan for their efforts to promote regional legislative priorities to General Assembly members. Mr. Crum noted that as this session comes to a close, there will be potential opportunities to engage with General Assembly members regarding next year's priorities.

- Mr. Crum recognized staff members Mr. Andrew Margason, HRPDC General Services Manager, and Ms. Katie Cullipher, HRPDC Principal Environmental Education Planner, for their efforts, along with other staff members, over the last year to implement sustainable practices in the areas of pollution prevention, wildlife habitat enhancement, and community outreach and education. Because of this dedication to environmental stewardship, the HRPDC was recognized as a Commitment Level Business Partner at Elizabeth River Project's annual awards ceremony.

Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Report

Ms. Terry Danaher, HRPDC/HRTPO Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Chair, noted that many cities have organized complete count committees for the upcoming 2020 Census. She cautioned that undercounting could result in underrepresentation and underfunding. She urged census participation promotion on a local and regional level.

Approval of Consent Items

The following items were on the Consent Agenda for approval:

- a. Meeting Minutes – January 16, 2020 Commission Meeting
- b. Treasurer's Report – December 2019
- c. Procurement of On-Call Service Contracts to Support HRPDC Programs

Chair Hipple referenced the consent agenda items and called for a motion.

Motion: Commissioner Robert Dyer Moved to approve the Consent Agenda; seconded by Commissioner McKinley Price. The Motion Carried.

Regional Branding Initiative

Mr. Crum introduced Mr. Doug Smith, Hampton Roads Economic Development Alliance President and CEO, to brief the Commission on the regional branding initiative.

Mr. Smith recognized audience members Jeremy Taylor, Hampton High School Senior and Chairman of the Hampton Youth Commission; Alisa Crider, tHRive Young Professionals Immediate Past Chair; and Joashua Schulman, Virginia Beach Attorney, for their integral participation in and support of the regional branding effort.

Mr. Smith began his presentation by encouraging Commission Members to visit the Envisioning2020.com website for additional information regarding the region-wide collaborative process. His presentation encompassed seven main themes:

- The regional branding effort was not about a name; it was about how to advance the Hampton Roads market. The initiative included understanding Hampton Roads' current brand identity, awareness, perceptions, and misperceptions and developing recommendations for marketing the region.

- The Envision 2020 Project Task Force, of 31 organization representatives and community leaders from across the region, dedicated approximately 2,000 volunteer hours to the effort. The demographic surveys of potential visitors, business owners, site-selection consultants, and residents were advertised on four television stations, in the newspaper, and through a comprehensive email campaign resulting in 2,906 survey participants.
- Hampton Roads compares poorly to other metropolitan regions with 1 to 4 million residents. Over the past decade, Hampton Roads ranks 35th of 39 for job growth, 36th for wage growth, and 37th for gross domestic product. Additionally, the region does not currently have enough skilled laborers for industries of interest. The population histogram used to look like a triangle, but now the triangle has inverted with very few people at the bottom. There is a shortage of young adults aged 18 to 34, which is the demographic that predominately relocates, and the United States “Mover Rate” is at an all-time low of 11 percent. Placemaking and place marketing are more essential now than ever and need to focus on attracting young adults.
- Hampton Roads has never marketed itself as a unified region. The survey responses indicate that there is very little external awareness of Hampton Roads. Additionally, there is little internal understanding of the region and its defining traits. Residents and business leaders struggle to define what Hampton Roads is and to be emotionally connected to it. Of survey respondents, only 40 percent of residents and 30 percent of business leaders identify strongly with the Hampton Roads region. Research indicated that Coastal Virginia and Hampton Roads have equal but opposite support. No option received more than 30 percent overall preference. Launching a new region name now would cause division.
- The region needs a unifying pride-building campaign. The market position for residents is where everyone easily connects with the coastal environment, the country, and the world. The market position for businesses is where companies easily connect with the world and the talent they need. The suggestion is for all of the different regional names currently in use, including Tidewater, Coastal Virginia, and Hampton Roads, simply incorporate 757. Integrating 757 offers everyone an opportunity to join in without undergoing a major name change or rebranding.
- The 757 is already in use, especially with young people, and is the way many connect with the entire region; it has transformed from an area code reference into a place brand name. The momentum around 757 is building, but there needs to be a balance between promoting the 757 and allowing it to remain grassroots.

**Commissioner Tom Leahy departed*

- The regional branding initiative will include creating a branding task force and a 757 branding resource center, engaging famous people and celebrities from the 757 to create a place that everyone can celebrate, and cultivating Pharrell Williams’ efforts to create recognition and change the perception of Hampton Roads. Mr. Smith appealed to the Commission to actively support the initiative for the initial

six-month launch, and then, after regrouping and assessing the traction and impact, work together to plan for the future of the region, including how to name and market the region to the world.

Mr. Smith concluded his presentation with some samples of possible 757 integration concepts and a regional branding video.

Chair Hipple thanked Mr. Smith for his presentation and asked the body for questions.

Commissioner Brent Fedors commended the project task force for their regional branding efforts. He stated that while he understands the intended disassociation with area code, he believes that no young person in Gloucester County will ever consider themselves a part of the 757 because of the exclusivity of the area code. However, he agrees that as an internal community unification and pride building campaign, 757 is the most powerful option for the majority of the region to embrace. Additionally, a unification and workforce building initiative for the young adult demographic can, in turn, attract major employers looking to site their next major investment. Commissioner Fedors added that Hampton Roads was never marketed as a unified region or developed as a moniker that the outside world would recognize, and future investment should focus on how to represent and market Hampton Roads externally to attract those major economic development investments.

Chair Hipple thanked Commissioner Fedors for his comments. He stated that the campaign is the start of bigger things and hoped that all localities will benefit from and support the 757 effort.

**Commissioner Bob Dyer departed*

Commissioner Fedors commented that the 757 is organic and has been in use as an identifying moniker for a long enough time to now gain traction in public forums. He stated that Gloucester is not offended and does not feel left out; he simply offers a different perspective that 757 does not encompass the entire region.

Vice-Chair Andria McClellan shared her excitement about the initiative. She shared that she tells her colleagues in Norfolk that the regional branding initiative is not about a name, it is about telling the region's story. She also shared that when she had the opportunity to present at an infrastructure challenge in Columbus, she referred to Hampton Roads as the most important region in the United States that people have never heard of. People are not aware that the region encompasses 3,000 miles of coastline, the largest concentration of military and federal assets, 400 years of history, the North American headquarters of NATO, and the second busiest port on the East Coast. Vice-Chair McClellan concluded her comments by commending HREDA for their leadership on this initiative to tell the region's story in a uniformed way with marketing dollars behind it.

Ms. Terry Danaher asked Mr. Smith if there are plans to market 757 that visually include Gloucester or if there could be an adoption procedure.

Mr. Smith stated that the next steps need to balance telling the story with not smothering it. To succeed, 757 needs to remain grassroots rather than being driven by an organization or government. Mr. Smith assured Commissioner Fedors that external positioning of the Hampton Roads community will be a future focus and that this internal community unification and pride building campaign is only the first step.

Commissioner Phillip Bazzani reflected on the tremendous tourism impact potential that 757 offers the region. He encouraged efforts to include Gloucester and its important history.

Commissioner McKinley Price counseled that as this initiative moves forward, it is important to amplify the young people for whom 757 was already a part of their culture.

Chair Hipple agreed with Commissioner Price's remark.

Executive Director Crum stated that the Commission was not being asked for funding or to endorse the 757 initiative. He commented that there are some private entities that HREDA is working with for fundraising. He added that Mr. Smith's presentation demonstrated some examples of how localities can easily support and participate in the initiative. In six months, the project task force will be able to evaluate how the initiative is being received, if it is working, what the vibe is like, and if the strategy needs to change. Mr. Crum recognized the Future of Hampton Roads and audience member Mr. Robbyn Gayer who was on the task force. Mr. Crum referenced the 757 stickers that were handed out before the meeting, indicated that the stickers, along with different versions, were printed by the Future of Hampton Roads. Mr. Crum invited Mr. Gayer to comment further.

Mr. Robbyn Gayer explained that the Future of Hampton Roads is a nonprofit community think tank that has been working for 35 years to help the cities in the region collaborate where practicable. The Future of Hampton Roads wanted to invest in the regional branding effort in a tangible way, and the stickers were a mechanism to help contribute. Mr. Gayer stated that he invested and bought some stickers himself, and the Future of Hampton Roads board also purchased some. The Governor's School helped arrange an introduction, held a competition, and produced several stickers themselves. Mr. Gayer noted that there will be thousands more produced.

Commissioner Debbie Ritter shared that one of the reactions she has heard is that nobody was aware this effort was happening. She stated that because the information was not widely disseminated, acceptance will be an uphill climb. She asked if there was a website with all of the information including who was on the task force, what the survey questions were, and what the results were.

Mr. Smith responded that the website Envisioning2020.com has all of that information and more.

Commissioner Ritter asked if the website contains the names of the participants and the groups that the outreach went to. She shared that people are asking because they feel they were excluded.

Mr. Smith indicated that the website does contain that information. He also encouraged Commissioner Ritter to share the site address and the fact that it was announced on all the major television stations, printed in the newspaper, and disseminated through mass emails from all of the participating organizations. He stated that while 2,906 responses is a good result, he agrees that arguably there should have been more.

Commissioner Ritter stated that it might be an indication of where people obtain their information because people are watching less television and newspaper circulation has reduced considerably.

Mr. Smith agreed and responded that there were also survey recipients that did not participate.

Commissioner Ritter stated she did not receive the survey and wondered how many people did receive it.

Chair Hipple thanked the Commission Members for their input and asked if there were any additional questions or comments. There being none, he thanked Mr. Smith for his presentation and advanced to the next item on the agenda.

Regional Economic Development Site Inventory

Executive Director Crum introduced Mr. Keith Cannady, HRPDC Deputy Executive Director, to provide the Commission with an overview of the Regional Economic Development Sites Inventory and discuss the recommended next steps for the project.

Mr. Cannady began his presentation with background information about the Regional Economic Development Sites Inventory. This initiative is aimed at increasing the region's competitiveness for attracting investment and creating jobs in Hampton Roads. According to the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP), the Commonwealth was eliminated from consideration for at least 47 projects and \$6.5 billion in investment from 2005 to 2014 because of the lack of developable sites and buildings. Additionally, in 2018, the Commonwealth was eliminated from consideration for the \$1.6 billion in investment and 4,000 jobs of the Toyota/Mazda plant.

The ongoing collaboration to prepare development sites involves several economic development business entities including VEDP, HREDA, GWP, Reinvent Hampton Roads, Local Economic Development Departments, Local Real Estate Brokers, The Port of Virginia, Dominion Energy, and Virginia Natural Gas. Project accomplishments to date include confirming the lack of shovel-ready sites, completing certification reports for sites that are 25 acres and more, completing market evaluations, and setting priorities to improve readiness and maximize the impact of projects.

The state has a standard tier rating system used to rank sites for readiness. Tier 1 is essentially raw land with no infrastructure and Tier 4 and 5 are ready for purchase and construction. Statewide, VEDP evaluated 466 sites of 25 acres or more; approximately 90

percent were in Tier 1 or Tier 2 categories and only 30 sites were project-ready. Regionally, of 72 sites, only three were considered business ready.

Investing in site development can make Hampton Roads more competitive for future projects, and regional collaboration can maximize participation in site development and project wins. The developability scores for sites will allow identification of less costly sites, increasing the potential for returns.

Mr. Cannady concluded his report with recommendations for the next steps including performing due diligence work to improve tier levels of priority sites, applying for a Regional GO Virginia matching grant, and administering consultant assistance for the performance of site work. Mr. Cannady described the specific action requested of the Commission as authorization for the Executive Director to submit a GO Virginia grant application and to seek consulting assistance to further advance the readiness of development sites in Hampton Roads.

Chair Hipple asked the body for questions.

Commissioner Donnie Tuck asked how recent the data was. He indicated that within the last two weeks, Hampton had recertified a site as Tier 4.

Mr. Cannady responded that the figures were as of late 2019 and that there have been improvements since then.

Executive Director Crum commented that he and Mr. Cannady have been working closely with HREDA, Greater Williamsburg Partnership (GWP), and VEDP on reviewing all sites in detail. He shared that VEDP indicated that other regions are not as far along nor are they working together. The opportunity is for Hampton Roads to have the most shovel-ready sites in the Commonwealth and garner interest from the private sector to invest in job creation.

Commissioner Donnie Tuck asked if 25 acres was the minimum acreage for a site to be included in the inventory.

Mr. Cannady acknowledged that the data does consist of sites that are 25 acres or more. Originally, only sites with 100 acres or more were included, but now there is a much larger inventory.

Motion: Commissioner Donnie Tuck Moved to authorize the Executive Director to submit a GO Virginia grant application and seek consulting services; seconded by Commissioner Andria McClellan. The Motion Carried.

Legislative Update

Executive Director Crum referenced a handout summarizing HRPDC-related bills that have been submitted through the General Assembly session thus far and deferred his oral report due to time constraints and the threat of inclement weather.

HRPDC Three Month Tentative Schedule

Chair Hipple briefed the Commission on the Three-Month Tentative Schedule.

Executive Director Crum highlighted that the HRPDC and HRTPO will begin holding two meetings per year on the Peninsula at Christopher Newport University (CNU). The intention is to meet at CNU for the May 21, 2020 meeting and the October 15, 2020 meeting.

Advisory Committee Summaries

Chair Hipple referenced the Advisory Committee Summaries.

For Your Information

Chair Hipple noted the For Your Information section, which included the following items:

- Offshore Wind Information Update
- HRPDC Joins the Ranks of Regional Businesses “Doin’ Right by the River”

On Thursday, January 23, 2020, the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission was recognized by the Elizabeth River Project (ERP) as a River Star Business for 2020. In an effort led by General Services Manager Andrew Margason, the HRPDC has taken several steps over the last year to implement sustainable practices in the areas of pollution prevention, wildlife habitat enhancement, and community outreach and education. Because of this dedication to environmental stewardship, HRPDC was recognized as a Commitment Level Business Partner at ERP’s annual awards ceremony.

**Commissioners Neil Morgan and Brent Fedors departed*

Old/New Business

There was no old or new business.

Adjournment

With no further business to come before the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission, the meeting adjourned at 1:31 p.m.

Michael Hipple
Chair

Robert A. Crum, Jr.
Executive Director