

**Town of Onancock**  
**Planning Commission Meeting**  
**April 1, 2024**  
**6:00 PM**

1) **Call to Order**

Chairperson Schreiber called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

2) **Attendance/Establish Quorum**

Chairperson Schreiber, Commissioners T. Lee Byrd, Jake Dillon, Larry Frey, and Carol Tunstall were present. Commissioners Bill Bagwell and Brandon Brockmeier were not present. A quorum was established. Town Manager Spuck and Town Clerk Debbie Caton were also present.

3) **Approve minutes: March 4, 2024, meeting** - Commissioner Tunstall moved to approve the amended minutes. Commissioner Dillon requested an amendment to his comment from the March meeting. Commissioner Dillon seconded the motion. The motion passed with a 4-0 vote.

**Chairperson Schreiber amended the agenda to allow for public comments before discussing Article II, Stopping, Standing and Parking.**

4) **Public Comment**

- a. **Dr. Greg Felthousen** – Dr. Felthousen recently attended meetings of the Planning Commission, Town Council and Waterfront Committee. During the Waterfront committee meeting it was announced the floating docks will be dredged this fall. He asked if the material is sand, silt or mud? Who knows this information and if there is a plan to prevent it from happening in future? (Dr. Felthousen’s full notes are attached.)
- b. **Rosemary Paparo** –Ms. Paparo asked if the planning commission has any input on the town’s recent permit application to DEQ to draw water for an additional thousand homes that are located outside the town limits. If yes, has the Planning Commission reviewed the report from CHA Consulting which indicates the pumping levels are safe now but can be easily imperiled if we pump more water. Ms. Paparo asked if the planning commission has any input with town council on water issues. Chairperson Schreiber informed Ms. Paparo that the Planning Commission does not have anything whatsoever to do with town water.
- c. **Priscilla Hart** – Ms. Hart looks forward to hearing the plan on parking regulations.
- d. **Dana Simson** – Ms. Simson is interested in Onancock’s future growth goals. Other towns like Cape Charles, VA and Berlin, MD have residents moving out of town because of the growth and being overrun by tourists. Ms. Simson would like town officials to look at resources and infrastructure and what would be best to make everyone happy.

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5) **Article II, Stopping Standing and Parking, Review updated version.**

After a joint public hearing at the February 26, 2024 meeting, the Planning Commission heard from both the public and town council. It was decided the parking ordinance needed to be reviewed again. The Planning Commission reviewed the ordinance for a second time at their meeting on March 1, 2024. After reviewing the current ordinance, a few typos and corrections will be updated. Commissioner Dillon moved to approve the revised ordinance. Commissioner Tunstall seconded the motion. The motion passed with a 4-0 vote.

6) **Top 5 Areas of Zoning Risk** - Town Manager Spuck explained the Planning Commission asked which ordinances need more focus in the next six months. After some research and lawyer's advice as to which ordinances cause municipalities the most appeals and litigation, the following list was developed.

- (1) **Sign Regulations** – ordinance already updated.
- (2) **Special Use Permit** – this will be on the agenda for an upcoming meeting for review.
- (3) **Setback Requirements** – no current issues with the setbacks in R1A, R1B and R1C.
- (4) **Height Restrictions** – the current height restrictions are 2-1/2 stories or thirty-five feet and there would be no reason to go higher.
- (5) **Density Requirements** – this will be on the agenda for an upcoming meeting for review.

7) **Discuss progress made on Comprehensive Plan and timing of next** – The state requires that we readopt a comprehensive plan every five years. Town Manager Spuck suggested in about a year the Planning Commission should begin the review process.

8) **Commissioner comments**

Chairperson Schreiber addressed the audience stating the Planning Commission is an advisory group to Town Council. As the elected body, the Town Council has the final decision. Chairperson Schreiber read the charge of the Planning Commission from the town's website.

9) **Adjourn** - Commissioner Tunstall moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Frey seconded the motion. The motion passed with a 4-0 vote. The meeting adjourned at 6:38 PM.

Planning Commission Meeting 4/1/24

Tonight' agenda includes preliminary discussions about the upcoming Comprehensive Plan for our town. I have been present at the last meeting of the Waterfront Committee and your last meeting of the Planning Commission. Both of these meeting were very informative and have brought to my mind several ideas.

- 1) Our town is planning to dredge around the piers and docks at the wharf this fall..... A good idea. That said, it was mentioned in the question period that there have been no evaluations of the type of material that is to be removed (ie. muck, sand, clay, silt). My guess is that it is likely a soup of all of the above. There was also no mention as to where these materials have come from. Again, my best guess would be from the runoff from our streets and local properties, especially those on the middle branch of Onancock Creek. And, most importantly, there was no discussion as to how a reduction and/or prevention of a renewed re-silting of the docks might be developed.
- 2) As part of the upcoming Comprehensive Plan I would like the Commissioners to consider the following in developing the new plan.
  - Direct the Town Council to focus on getting Onancock certified as an Eco-friendly tourist destination. The targeted audience would be incoming visitors interested in a healthy environment and the arts. The Main Street Organization could market this broadly ( A2O....Arts is Onancock ).
  - Studies could be done to improve the health of our 3 tributaries that feed Onancock Creek..... The recent Source Water Protection Plan provided by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality reported that the middle branch tributary is polluted with E.Coli !!!
  - Enlist the help of environmental groups,VA DEQ, VIMS, the Nature Conservancy, Va Tech in developing ways to reduce silt and polluting run off from the towns roads and parking lots.
  - Focus on the Queen Street parking lot :
    - Make Queen Street and and the parking areas permeable
    - Install a high tech solar "garage" to be used to power the new visitor center and provide a well lighted and attractive parking shelter with car charging capabilities. Think of this as both an attraction to visitors coming off route 13 and a place to draw visitors to the art centers and businesses in our town. AND .... It promotes our eco-friendly message !

It was just announced on WHRO that massive new funding is being given to restore the Chesapeake Bay.

- \$ 96,000,000. from the federal infrastructure bill, “ Investing in America ”, solely for the Chesapeake Bay

- Another \$ 206,000,000. through the EPA will be given to use by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the Chesapeake Bay Trust ( \$13 million). In the announcement Tim Kaine is quoted “ This \$200 million is going to be heavily focused on grants that focus on non-point sources “..... ie., like pollution of the creeks feeding the bay.

For additional information, please go to the following resources :

- WHRO
- parking “garages” at Salisbury University
- website for Virginia DEQ (go to programs, then pollution prevention, then to Virginia green)
- virginia~~green~~.net