

ACCOMACK-NORTHAMPTON PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE
July 15, 2024 Meeting
ENTERPRISE BUILDING
ACCOMAC, VIRGINIA

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Robert Crockett	Accomack County
C. Reneta Major	Accomack County
Arthur Leonard	Town of Chincoteague
Rev. Charles J. Kellam	Northampton County
Betsy Mapp	Northampton County
Gwendolyn F. Turner	Accomack County
Donna Smith	Accomack County
Vanessa Johnson	Accomack County
L. Dixon Leatherbury	Northampton County
John Coker	Northampton County
Adam Charney	Northampton County

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

Donald L. Hart, Jr.	Accomack County
Vacant	Accomack County

OTHERS PRESENT:

Elaine Meil	Anne Doyle
Eric Luchansky	Leanna Rasmussen
Russ Williams	Sandy Taylor
Myra-Riley Taylor	

1. Call to Order
The July 15, 2024 meeting of the Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission (A-NPDC) was called to order by Chairman Mapp at 7:04 p.m.
2. Invocation
Commissioner Kellam offered the Invocation.
3. Minutes of the June 17, 2024 Meeting
The Minutes of the June 17, 2024 Meeting were presented. Commissioner Turner moved to approve the minutes as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Major, the motion was carried by unanimous vote.

4. Public Participation

Myra-Riley Taylor from the Bayside Community in Onanocck, Virginia attended the meeting.

5. Financial Status Report

The report indicated that 68.75 percent of the FY 2024 Budget was expended while 100 percent of the fiscal year had passed.

It was noted that year-end entries may still be in order and would be reflected as part of the FY 2024 financial audit.

Commissioner Crockett asked for the amount of roll over funds for FY25. The final amount would be given at the next meeting.

Commissioner Crockett moved to approve the Financial Status Report as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Charney, the motion was carried by unanimous vote.

6. Financial Statement / Bills Payable

The Financial Statement, including the current Bills Payable were presented. Commission approval of the Financial Statement was requested.

Commissioner Crockett moved to approve the Financial Statement and Bills Payable. Seconded by Commissioner Turner, the motion was carried by unanimous vote.

7. FY2024 Audit

Auditors from Dunham, Aukamp & Rhodes, PLC. would visit the office on August 5th and 6th to perform some preliminary testing and would return September 9th and 10th to complete the audit requirements.

No action was taken.

8. Projects

Informational Items

Director of Planning Report

Below is a comprehensive list of Planning Department projects, should you wish to contact the project manager for more information. Details about featured projects follow the list.

3220 - EDA-Economic Development Planning	A. Doyle
3600 - Drone Medical Package Delivery	A. Doyle
3592 - Bay Act DEQ BMPs	A. Doyle
3211 - USDA for Melfa Industrial Park for Economic Development Authority	A. Doyle
3526 - VCZMP Technical Assistance & Resiliency Planning	A. Doyle
3568 - VDEQ VCZMP 306 Ecotourism Resiliency	A. Doyle
3401 - VDOT Rural Transportation Planning	S. Lewis
3589 - VDEM Hazard Mitigation Plan 2026	S. Lewis
3221 - Wachapreague Sewer Installation Project	S. Lewis

3587 - Navigable Waterways Committee	K. Singleton
3571 - A-N Ground Water Committee Projects	E. Meil
3334 - Agricultural Study	K. Singleton
3580 - DEQ Chesapeake Bay WIP	E. Luchansky
3764 - Town of Parksley Downtown Revitalization	A. Doyle
3353 - Waterway Dredging Northampton County - Nassawadox Creek Phase 1	K. Singleton
3365 - Waterway Dredging Northampton County - Nassawadox Creek Phase 2	K. Singleton
3351 - Waterway Dredging Northampton County - Kings Creek Phase 2	K. Singleton
3355 - Waterway Dredging Northampton County - Red Bank Creek Phase 1	K. Singleton
3352 - Waterway Dredging Accomack County - Folly Creek Phase 1	K. Singleton
TBD - Safety Action Plan - USDOT Safe Streets for All Program	A. Doyle
TBD - FHWA RAISE Grant for ESRT	A. Doyle

3220

Economic Development Administration - Economic Development Planning

Anne Doyle, ext. 115

A new Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) needed to be developed, completed and released to the region by 2026. The plan had to be posted electronically with an ability to update the economic indicators informing the plan on a quarterly basis. Progress continued to be made as time and funding permitted. The region's Economic Development Committee met on June 13, 2024 and had conducted several follow-up meetings to advance regional economic initiatives.

3600

Drone Medical Package Delivery

Anne Doyle, ext. 115

The project was scheduled August 8th as the demonstration date for drone medicine delivery on Tangier Island. Planning District Commissioners were invited to attend the demonstration and transportation can be arranged. Please RSVP to Anne. A-NPDC was also working with DroneUp, Riverside and ODU to prepare a grant application for Stage 2 of the project that would operationalize the initiative on the Eastern Shore and in some of Virginia's other medically underserved regions.

3592

Technical Assistance for the Bay Act

Anne Doyle, ext. 115

A-NPDC was working with incorporated towns to bring them into compliance with the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act. Links to each town's webpage have been established listing its Bay Act actions. Staff were aware of scheduling in September a training session with all (incorporated and unincorporated) Eastern Shore towns to incorporate Bay Act measures into their comprehensive plans so that resilience measures are part of every town's planning process.

3211

USDA Rural Business Development Grant

Anne Doyle, ext. 115

Staff prepared the Request for Proposal (RFP) package for the market planning study. It is currently advertised on the eVA platform with proposals due at the end of July. The stormwater master plan for the Melfa Industrial Park is at 60% completion. Cornerstone Environmental Services presented its progress to the Economic Development Authority board members on July 8th.

Staff was organizing a “Community Needs for Resilience Planning” training session in September that will be open to leaders of all incorporated and unincorporated towns. The agenda is straightforward and impactful: 1) Highlight Successful Resilience Plans, Including Oyster and Saxis, 2) Training and Tips for Incorporating Resilience into Eastern Shore Locality Plans, and 3) Total Data Tools vs. Relevant Data Tools and How to Use Them.

Staff successfully completed the 2024 Virginia Certified Ecotour Guide Course and practical exam at the end of June, passing the largest class of students since before the pandemic. The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality was pleased with the results and the Virginia Tourism Corporation has highlighted this year’s initiative in its newsletter and press. Special thanks went out to Mary and Bill Burnham in Onancock for their invaluable partnership.

Staff participated in SMART SCALE Round 6 Full Application training sponsored by the Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment (OIPI) on June 4th. Full applications were due on August 1st.

FHWA approved the FY25 Rural Work Program (RWP) submitted by the A-NPDC. Staff continued to assist the Eastern Shore Rail Trail Foundation with increasing public outreach online and via various outreach events, in compliance with the RWP. The quarterly transportation newsletter was distributed to a growing audience and the foundation has expanded its social media presence to additional platforms with an aim of increasing project awareness and support. On June 21st, the foundation successfully hosted its first fundraising event in Parksley and it would serve as a launching pad for future events.

The VDEM grant kick-off meeting was held in April. Subsequent to the kick-off, staff met with VDEM representatives to discuss statewide hazard mitigation planning. The intent was for the Commonwealth of Virginia Hazard Mitigation Plan to better integrate regional/local needs and plans into an “Enhanced Plan” that would make additional hazard mitigation grant funds available in Virginia. The Eastern Shore Disaster Preparedness Coalition had agreed to partner with the A-NPDC, adding Hazard Mitigation Planning to its quarterly meeting agenda. Details of this forward action would be summarized in the next report to be completed by July 15th.

A-NPDC met with the new Town Clerk and other local stakeholders to discuss roles/responsibilities and project status. Within the meeting, it was noted that the Hampton Roads Sanitation District (HRSD) anticipates construction to be completed by the end of this September. A follow-on meeting took place on July 9th to discuss the financial processes of this project. The meeting resulted in a reimbursement request submitted to DEQ for \$2.4 Million. We are still awaiting response from DEQ regarding the request to cover the \$60,000 shortfall for Change Order 6. This has not halted construction of the Wachapreague sewer installation project; all project and expenditure reports have been prepared.

The Nassawadox Creek project had submitted its Joint Permit Application and was awaiting issuance from the regulatory agencies before it could move forward to the construction phase. Red Bank Creek and Folly Creek dredging projects continued to be in the active design phase. Dredging material management and project funding remained considerations. The committee had decided to move forward with contractor-sourced material management with priority efforts. Beneficial reuse remained a consideration. On May 30th the Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) and the Community of Tangier Island hosted a resilience and adaptation discussion in which interest in coordination and possible models for beneficial use were discussed. The Virginia Port Authority had approved the dual MPPDC/A-NPDC Dredge Material Management Effort allocating up to \$3,048,500 to the Middle Peninsula Chesapeake Bay Public Access Authority for planning efforts. On June 25th, the Northampton Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution to request the transfer of the remaining balance, \$993,144.77 of the Kings Creek Dredging Project VPA Funds to the Nassawadox Creek Dredging effort. The next ESRNWC meeting would be held on Thursday, October 17, 2024, at the Enterprise Building.

The dredging of Nassawadox Creek was scheduled to begin after the completion of Phase 1B, which focused on the material management plan, including securing necessary permits and addressing environmental concerns. This phase was crucial for ensuring the proper and compliant management of dredged material. Funding had also been secured for a Dredge Material Management Initiative that would expedite future dredging efforts. While the exact duration and extent were being finalized, it was expected to address significant navigation and environmental issues in a 24,200 cubic yard area at the mouth of Nassawadox Creek. The Eastern Shore Regional Navigable Waterways Committee (ESRNWC) was collaborating closely with local stakeholders and regulatory bodies to ensure a comprehensive approach. The committee would keep the community informed as more details became available.

The Ground Water Committee did not meet in July. The next meeting would be August 20. Staff had sent a letter to all property owners having a well identified by VDH records as being in the Columbia (shallow) aquifer or paleochannel. The well testing program was expected to take place in October 2024. The Committee approved Change Order #1 for additional services with Arcadis to provide technical assistance for the collection.

Dr. Abhilash Chandel of Virginia Tech had completed all data collection including 32 years of Virginia Eastern Shore climate, planting, yield, and satellite data totaling 26 TB of data for the project. The team had produced a dashboard for accessing the data and was testing the dashboard before moving it into production. Once in production, the dashboard would enable multiple scenarios to be examined that would ultimately inform crop production on the Eastern Shore. Dr. Chandel's and the staff's current progress was presented to members of the Coastal Planning District Commission at its May 23, 2024 meeting.

At long last, the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) was administratively closing-out this completed project. Town leaders in Parksley were appreciative of the successful efforts to remove blight, enhance access and safety, and beautify through civic planting Parksley's town center. The DHCD agency had stated it will approve the reimbursement of invoices submitted six months ago.

Staff continued to educate clients on the proper use of well and septic systems.

The next steps following the Safe Streets for All (SS4A) grant award was the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) establishment and execution of a grant agreement with the A-NPDC. In the meantime, staff had participated in the Introductory Webinar for FY24 Grant Recipients facilitated by the US Department of Transportation (USDOT). There was also a panel discussion on safety actions, linked to SS4A, during the June Quarterly Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) meeting on June 25th.

Resulting from a successful RFP solicitation, staff had shortlisted three professional engineering firms that would be interviewed for selection on July 16th and 19th. The selection committee consisted of personnel from Canonie Atlantic Company, the Eastern Shore Rail Trail Foundation, Accomack County Public Works, and A-NPDC Planning personnel. The selected firm's first two tasks would be to modify the project limits and to modify project costs given that VDOT was no longer administering the project.

Director of Housing Services Report

Below is a comprehensive list of Housing Service Department projects, should you wish to contact the project manager for more information. Details about the featured projects follow the list.

3661 - HUD-Housing Counseling Services	A. Wert
3662 - VHDA HCE Foreclosure/Housing Counseling	A. Wert
315710 - Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS)	A. Press

Community Partners of the Eastern Shore's General Membership met on July 10th at ESCC. Member updates were presented and planning for the upcoming year was discussed. The Homeless Management Information System committee met on June 11th. This committee had begun work on a local 10 year plan to end homelessness. Point-In-Time Count numbers had been processed. The report indicated a decline in local homelessness, as defined by HUD. Level funding was awarded for the ongoing grant.

22 clients were receiving homeownership counseling. 3 clients had prequalified for a loan and were looking for a home, but due to USDA freezing funding they had been put on a waitlist. 19 clients were working to repair their credit, pay down debt, and increase their savings and/or income. 3 clients should be ready to secure mortgage approval in 2024 barring any unforeseen setbacks. No current foreclosure clients. 6 clients had successfully purchased homes in the past 20 months, and 3 of these families were formerly Section 8 tenants.

Staff continued to conduct Financial Literacy, Rental Topics, and Fair Housing classes for new HCV recipients during intake briefings. These briefings were being held twice monthly, with 8-10 attendants in each class.

Staff was conducting a landlord education event on July 22nd at ESCC. Invitations had been sent out to existing Section 8 landlords, and advertising and outreach targeting potential new landlords was ongoing. This would be a limited seating event and require RSVP for attendance.

The application for the recurring grant was submitted in May. An undetermined increase in funding was expected.

HUD awarded A-NRHA the Family Self Sufficiency(FSS) program as a supplement to administration of the HCV/Section 8 program. FSS offered financial incentives to qualified working HCV families, including escrow accounts and one-on-one housing counseling. The goal of the program would be to build credit and assets in an effort to graduate from assistance and purchase a home, or otherwise become self-sufficient. FSS aligns well with the existing Housing Counseling programs.

Director of Housing Development Report

Below please find a list of A-NPDC related Housing Development Department projects, should you wish to contact the project manager for more information. Details about featured projects follow the list.

300640 - Town of Onancock-Northeast Neighborhood	E. Luchansky
3690 - Occhannock Neck Road Project	E. Luchansky
3823 -FEMA - VDEM Accomack County	E. Luchansky
4710- HMGP - DR-4001 & DR-4411	E. Luchansky
3801 - East Horntown CDBG Planning Grant	E. Luchansky
3340 - Holland Lane CDBG Planning Grant	E. Luchansky
4401 - VDH Septic and Well Assistance Program	E. Luchansky
300660 - Makemie Park Urgent Need Project	K. Singleton

300640

Town of Onancock - Northeast Neighborhood

Eric Luchansky, ext. 118

15 Watson was under construction. Staff met with the town to prioritize the remaining rehabs. Contracts would be issued to the next two homes this month. Staff had submitted a grant for \$1.5 million to install sidewalks in the project area.

3690

Occohannock Neck Road Project

Eric Luchansky, ext. 118

Staff was working with Slate Design to have a duplex and custom two-bedroom home permit-ready plans. The home on Virginia Avenue had been demolished.

3823

Accomack County VA HMGP 4291-VA-009 Elevation Project

Eric Luchansky, ext. 118

All necessary paperwork was obtained to acquire and demolish one home in Saxis.

4710

Accomack County VA 4401-VA-016 Elevation/Acquisition Project

Eric Luchansky, ext. 118

Staff was preparing a bid package in an attempt to lower the original price to elevate one home in Parksley.

3801

East Horntown Planning Grant

Eric Luchansky, ext. 118

Staff had submitted a grant to demolish four derelict homes and rebuild 5 substandard homes.

3340

Holland Lane - Cheriton Planning Grant

Eric Luchansky, ext. 118

Staff had submitted a grant to demolish one derelict home and rebuild two substandard homes.

4401

VDH Septic and Well Assistance Program

Eric Luchansky, ext. 118

Staff was preparing to bid out the next three jobs for septic replacement.

300660

Makemie Park Urgent Need Project

Kellen Singleton, ext. 114

To date all 26 septic systems had been installed, per the initial construction agreement and contract addendum. On 5/23 and 5/24 A-NPDC staff conducted a door-to-door Letter of Recordation signature soliciting effort. Staff discussed Virginia Fair Housing Law and proper landscaping on and around septic mound systems. An IFB had been drafted for the Makemie Park Sewage Disposal Area Decommissioning and solicited on the Accomack County website as well as the June 21 issue of the Eastern Shore Post. A pre-bid meeting was held July 1st and bids for IFB #763 would be opened 4 PM July 11th at the Enterprise Building

9. Executive Director's Memo

2024 Well Testing Program

The Ground Water Committee had been advocating for the use of the Columbia (shallow aquifer) for irrigation the entirety of its existence. Lately, the state had been dismissive of the value of the Columbia and had been routinely allowing applicants to claim it has insufficient water or inferior water in a text block that is clearly copied from multiple applications showing that no one had even attempted to examine the Columbia in that location.

After numerous attempts to request the state stop accepting that language without success, the Committee has begun to collect more information on a broader scale of the Columbia aquifer. The Ground Water Committee was responding to this issue in the 2024 Well Testing Program.

The program was targeting Columbia (shallow) wells for testing. Older shallow wells are often buried and were run to pump houses. Staff had sent a direct letter to households that the Virginia Department of Health database show are likely Columbia wells.

In addition, staff would post flyers in the post offices and conduct online and newspaper advertisements to seek Columbia well participants. Commission was advised if they knew anyone who had a Columbia well to contact A-NPDC staff member, Faith Lewis, to be potentially included. The Committee had 140 testing slots and wanted a broad swath of data across the Eastern Shore to aid in responding to the state.

Enterprise Building

Stewart Hall was very responsive to the request to connect the Enterprise Building to Accomack's sewage system. It was possible to connect to Accomack but it could be costly.

MSA was retained by the school board to contemplate a similar connection and the estimate for the primary school to the connection behind the Administration Building was \$430,000. The next step was for A-NPDC to obtain the services of an engineer to complete a concept design and cost estimate.

Staff would seek an estimate from several engineering firms for design services and bring back the information to the Commission for consideration.

10. Chairman's Report

No report was given at the time.

11. Other Matters

No other matters were discussed at this time.

12. Adjournment

There being no further business brought before the Commission, Commissioner Leonard moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Turner, the meeting was then adjourned.

Chairman, Betsy Mapp

Executive Director, Elaine K. N. Meil