



**2017 ANNUAL REPORT
OF
THE MATHEWS COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION**

ADOPTED BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION:

February 20, 2018

INTRODUCTION

Section 15.2-2221, Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, prescribes the duties of the local planning commission. Among other things, these duties include a requirement to make recommendations and provide an annual report to the governing body concerning the operation of the commission and the status of planning within its jurisdiction;

This report generally describes the activities of the County of Mathews, the Planning Commission, and other local and regional agencies during calendar year 2017.

ZONING ACTIVITY

Zoning Permits	231
911 Plate	14
Business Permits	86
Rezoning	2
Septic Permits	6
Site Plans	3
Plan of Developments	20
Conditional Use Permits	5
Variances	0
Administrative Variance	5
Erosion & Sediment Permit	21
Subdivisions	17
Appeals	1
Amendments	2
Wetlands	26

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Mathews County saw major changes to its downtown infrastructure in 2017. The first construction portion of the Main Street Enhancement Project was awarded and built. Improvements include traffic calming, new paved asphalt travel surface, ADA-compliant pedestrian crosswalks & building access, landscaping, and drainage. Future construction portions of the project are planned, and the Main Street Committee is beginning to move towards funding that work.

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) from the Department of Housing & Community Development (DHCD) is wrapping up early in 2018. This grant funded facade improvements to twelve storefronts, a marketing and branding program for the County, and a small business revolving loan. The grant also funded development of streetscape plans for Brickbat Road; however, despite bid opportunities, no award was made due to lack of affordable bids. The plans will be kept on file in the event future funding opportunities for streetscape work become available to the County.

Planning staff continues to work with property owners in flood-prone areas of the County to apply for FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funds to elevate their houses above the identified Base Flood Elevation for the Special Flood Hazard Area where their properties are located. Working with Community Planning Partners, Inc., the County was awarded the following grants in 2014:

HMGP – DR4042 (Louisa Earthquake) – Elevate 9 homes and acquire 3 homes---1 home has

been acquired, six homes have elevated, and two more are in the midst of completion. Three homeowners dropped out of the program.

HMGP – DR4045 (Tropical Storm Lee) - Elevate 9 homes---4 homes have been elevated and one more home is scheduled to be lifted this spring. Four homeowners dropped out of the program.

HMGP – DR4092 (Hurricane Sandy) – Elevate 10 homes and acquire two homes---7 homes have been elevated, two have been acquired and one more is in the midst of completion. Two homeowners dropped out of the program.

In April of 2017, the County applied for funding made available following the Hurricane Matthew in October 2016. Eighteen homeowners signed up to participate in the program. The County was not awarded funds; award is based on the total benefit-cost ratio of the project, and our batch of homes to be elevated was not competitive with other localities. The County is seeking other streams of funding to elevate homes in the absence of specific disaster relief.

ENVIRONMENT

The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is moving forward with the implementation of Phase III requirements of the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area Designation and Management Regulations. In the summer of 2015, the County received a preliminary review summary from DEQ for the *Site Plan and Plat Consistency Review Checklist* and for the *Checklist for Advisory Review of Local Ordinances*. The Ordinances that were reviewed included the Mathews County's Zoning, Subdivision, and the Erosion and Sediment Control. Below are the requirements that must be met in order to be consistent with the State's regulations concerning the Bay Act.

Site Plan and Plat Checklist Requirements

- The County's land development ordinances require the depiction of RPA and RMA on the submitted site plans and plats,
- The County's Subdivision Ordinance requires a notation on plats of the requirement to retain an undisturbed and vegetated 1200-foot wide RPA buffer area,
- The County's Subdivision Ordinance requires a notation on plats of the Requirement for pump-out for on-site sewage treatment systems.
- The County's Subdivision Ordinance requires a notation on plats of the requirement to designate 100% reserve drainfield sites for on-site sewage systems,
- The County's Subdivision Ordinance requires a notation on plats that specifies permitted development in the PRA is limited to water dependent facilities or redevelopment in the RPA areas, including the 100-foot wide vegetated buffer,
- The County's Zoning Ordinance requires a notation on plans of the location of all covenant building lines, setbacks, easements and rights-of-way.

The summary of recommendation results from DEQ for consistency with the above provisions states that the County met the requirements and should not result in any amendments to the County's Ordinances.

Checklist for Advisory Review of Local Ordinances

The County's preliminary results demonstrated compliances in 29 out of 70 questions related to the consistency of the Bay Act program with State regulations in:

- Minimizing Land Disturbance

- Preserving Indigenous Vegetation
- Minimizing Impervious Cover
- General Water Quality Protection

The summary of recommendations by DEQ states that the County currently meets the CBPA Phase III requirements and does not have to adopt any additional ordinance amendments to be in compliance. However, an assessment of whether the provisions the County has adopted are implemented will be undertaken during the County's next compliance review. Mathews County is not up for review in 2018, but in the next coming year of 2019.

GENERAL AND FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION

Through the Virginia Association of Counties and the Virginia Municipal League, the County monitors pending legislative actions and their effects on localities. County administration and the Board of Supervisors continue to meet with various members of the State legislature and agency representatives to discuss the impact of these legislative actions on rural governments in general and Mathews County specifically. However, unfunded mandates and other factors continue to strain the budgetary and physical operations of local government.

The Planning Commission prepared the Capital Improvements Program (CIP), Fiscal Years 2012-2016 for the County. The CIP builds upon previous efforts and provides a better picture of existing and proposed capital projects and their fiscal impact. An updated CIP needs to be reviewed by the Planning Commission this year and a recommendation will be made to the Board of Supervisors.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

No approval of any zoning request has resulted in the destruction, loss, or damage of historic features.

The New Point Lighthouse Task Force was organized in order to create a Master Plan for the preservation and maintenance of the County's most recognizable landmark. A study funded through a matching grant from the Virginia General Assembly has resulted in a plan to increase protection around the lighthouse island. The work to rebuild an access pier to the island on which the lighthouse sits was advertised for bid this year and a construction contract was awarded. This work has been completed. The preservation phase is ongoing; McPherson Design Group P.C. of Norfolk, VA is currently developing plans for the rehabilitation of the structure. The first iteration of plans were sent to VDOT and DHR for review in early February.

The Historical Society applied for and received a matching grant from the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) to perform a survey of archeological and architectural resources in the County. The Board of Supervisors provided funds to satisfy the match requirements. In 2016, the Historical Society, in partnership with the County, sponsored a nomination for the Courthouse area to be designated as a historic district. The state review board with DHR approved the nomination in the spring of 2017.

HOUSING

The county continued its Section 8 rental assistance certificate program through the Virginia Housing Development Authority, the state agent for HUD. Additional units need to be obtained or developed to meet the demand for this type of housing. The Middle Peninsula Rental Assistance office located

in Gloucester locally administers the Section 8 program.

The County's 2030 Comprehensive Plan identifies the development of "senior-housing" as a development policy and strategy to be addressed by the Planning Commission. In 2014, a developer submitted a site plan to the Planning & Zoning Office for review for the development of a sixty-six (66) unit "senior-targeted" housing complex within the Village Mixed Use (VMU) Zoning District. The plans were reviewed by Planning & Zoning and various outside agencies and approved. Construction began on the project in 2015. Zoning permits were approved for 10 units in 2016. Erosion and Sediment inspections are on-going.

LAND USE

Zoning Text Amendments:

In 2017, the Planning Commission received two (2) applications for text amendments to the Zoning Ordinance, as follows:

Application 1-ZA-17: Request from Harvey G. & Sherri D. Hamm to amend Section 175-5.3 of the Mathews County Zoning Ordinance to add "Temporary Reception Facility" as a Conditional Use Permit in the Rural (RU) Zoning District. **At its meeting on June 20, 2017, the Planning Commission voted 6-0 to recommend the Board of Supervisors deny 1-ZA-17. The Board of Supervisors approved this amendment.**

Application 2-ZA-17: Request to amend Sections 175-2.2, 175-5.3 and 175-6.3 of the Mathews County Zoning Ordinance as it relates to "event venues". **At its meeting on January 16, 2018, the Planning Commission voted 5-0 to recommend the Board of Supervisors approve this amendment, as presented by staff. The Board of Supervisors approved this amendment.**

Zoning Map Amendments:

In 2017, the Planning Commission received two (2) applications for rezoning.

Application 1-RZ-17: Request from Kathryn Tatterson to rezone parcels 35 (A) 12, 13, 14 17 and 17A from Rural (RU) to Business-2 (B-2). **The Board of Supervisors approved this request.**

Application 2-RZ-17: Request from William D. Gottwald, III and Katherine Gottwald to rezone parcels 11A6 (13) B from Business-2 (B-2) to Residential-2 (R-2). **The Board of Supervisors approved this request in January of 2018.**

Conditional Use Permits:

Application 1-CUP-17: Request from Kenneth & Mary Pair for a Conditional Use Permit per Section 175- 6.3b(19) of the Mathews County Zoning Ordinance to allow a travel trailer on a temporary basis. The parcel is known as Tax Map 22 (A) 136A, 720 Whites Creek Lane, Diggs, VA 23045. The property is in the Residential-1 (R-1) Zoning District. **The Board of Supervisors approved this amendment with conditions presented by staff.**

Application 2-CUP-17: Request from Harvey G. & Sherri D. Hamm for a Conditional Use Permit per Section 175- 5.3b of the Mathews County Zoning Ordinance to allow a Temporary Reception Facility. The parcel is known as Tax Map 25 (A) 74, 131 Greene Rd, Mathews, VA 23109. The property is split-zoned Residential-1/Rural (R-1/RU). The Board of Supervisors denied this request.

Application 3-CUP-17: Request from Pamela Mullins for a Conditional Use Permit per Section 175-5.3b(24) of the Mathews County Zoning Ordinance to allow a travel trailer on a temporary basis. The parcel is known as Tax Map 20 (A) 100, 1022 Church Street, Mathews, VA 23109. The property is in the Rural (RU) Zoning District. **The Board of Supervisors approved this request with conditions presented by staff.**

Application 4-CUP-17: Request from Harvey G. & Sherri D. Hamm for a Conditional Use Permit per Section 175- 5.3b of the Mathews County Zoning Ordinance to allow a Temporary Reception Facility. The parcel is known as Tax Map 25 (A) 74, 131 Greene Rd, Mathews, VA 23109. The property is split-zoned Residential-1/Rural (R-1/RU). The applicant withdrew his request.

Application 5-CUP-17: Request from Bruce W. Keeling, III for a Conditional Use Permit per Section 175-6.3(6) of the Mathews County Zoning Ordinance to allow a craft industry, as defined. The parcel is known as Tax Map 29 (A) 119, 411 Rains Lane, Bohannon, VA 23021. The property is in the Residential-1 (R1) Zoning District. **The Board of Supervisors approved this request with conditions presented by staff.**

WATERFRONT ACCESS AND FACILITIES

Mathews County continues to be a member of the Middle Peninsula Chesapeake Bay Public Access Authority. This regional group is responsible for managing and preserving public access sites. Mathews County Administrator, Melinda Conner, represents the County on the Authority.

The Public Access Authority acquired a property along Billups Creek in 2013 through a donation by Conrad Hall. The County and the Access Authority have been considering requests from a non-profit organization to develop the property for recreation and public water access purposes. No decision has been made yet, however.

The County continues to repair and improve the public waterfront access sites. The county purchased the East River Boatyard at the end of Mill Lane Road. The long-term plan for this site is to develop a public fishing pier and a boat ramp to provide public access to the water for county residents and visitors.

In 2013, the County applied for funding from the Virginia Dept. of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) for a boat launch and a pier. The funding opportunity with DGIF was ultimately abandoned after it was found that commercial watermen would be excluded from using a DGIF-sponsored ramp and tending pier. Permitting through VMRC for the various improvements has been temporarily halted while the County works out issues with adjoining property owners.

The new restaurant tenant at the Grimstead Landing on Gwynn's Island made improvements to the dock in 2017 by adding several finger piers, which will expand tie-up capacity for restaurant patrons and ramp users. The County worked through the Corps of Engineers to plan, permit, and install a riprap revetment against the timber bulkhead immediately adjacent to the restaurant.

Staff began work on updating the Public Water Access Plan in late 2016. Information from the old plan was dated and didn't capture updated amenities or newly acquired sites. Staff will continue working on this plan through the first few months of 2018, with completion anticipated prior to the summer tourist season.

The Mathews Land Conservancy continues to pursue the development of the Williams Wharf Landing. This project will provide enhanced water access for motorless watercraft including use by the Mathews High School Crew team.

Waterways & navigation became a new focus of the County and the Planning Department in 2017, as several creeks and inlets shoaled badly enough that the Coast Guard removed navigation beacons from the channels. The County is taking ownership of remaining markers in Davis Creek and Milford Haven East; however, these are merely efforts to address symptoms of the larger problem of shoaling. Staff continues working with the Corps of Engineers to prioritize dredging projects in these channels. A large part of this effort is identifying potential sites for dredge spoil placement that the County is obligated to provide as part of the cooperative agreement between the County and the Corps for Federal project channels.

SOLID WASTE

The Virginia Peninsula Public Service Authority (VPPSA), on behalf of Mathews County and other authority member communities, continues to update its regional solid waste disposal and management techniques. VPPSA provides a recycling program for paper, cardboard, aluminum, metals, glass, oil, antifreeze, and some plastics at the solid waste transfer facility. VPPSA continues to explore the possibility of adding other recyclable materials to its current program.

TRANSPORTATION

The County has contracted with Bay Transit, a not-for-profit transit organization serving the region, to provide limited public transportation for County Residents. Continued participation in the ride share program sponsored by the Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission (MPPDC) remains one of the county's primary alternative transportation modes.

The County is continuing to evaluate, and to recommend various traffic safety changes such as speed zone reductions and intersection improvements at Commission and Board of Supervisors meetings. The Comprehensive Plan identifies various transportation improvements for the County within a twenty-year timeframe. VDOT has included funds for design and engineering for drainage improvements for Main Street within its six-year plan for the county. A public meeting was held in December, 2012 to solicit public input on the proposed drainage improvements in the Court House Area. In 2013, VDOT completed the design and engineering and began the process of acquiring easements for the improvements from property owners in the project area. After a brief delay due to litigation, the project was approved for bidding in early 2017. The job was awarded in the fall of 2017 to Howard Brothers Contractor, Inc., the same contractor who completed the Main Street Enhancement project. Work on that project began in November, and is estimated to last through much of 2018.

In addition to the Courthouse area drainage project, the County is partnering with VDOT in a revenue-sharing program to clean outfall ditches outside of VDOT's roadside right-of-way. Ditches have been cleaned at Antioch Church and St. Paul's Church in Susan, near Gullwing Cove Lane in Diggs, between Circle Drive and Pepper Creek in Bavon, and along Peachie Lane on Gwynn's Island. Future ditching plans include the Sandbank Road area, the Horn Harbor Avenue area, the area to the north of Hyco

Corner, and a ditch that connects the Main Street storm drains to Put-In Creek.

WASTEWATER

In 2002 the Board of Supervisors appointed a Sewer Study Committee in order to study the current central sewage collection and treatment situation in the Mathews Courthouse village and develop recommendations regarding the future of the system. The Committee submitted their report to the Board of Supervisors in November of 2002. The Committee recommended the construction of a sanitary sewer transmission force main (TFM) to transport sewage out of the county for ultimate treatment at a regional plant. The committee also recommended that the Board provide a careful review of existing land use ordinances and make appropriate alteration to these ordinances to ensure that the construction of a TFM does not encourage growth and development in areas not so designated in the county's comprehensive plan. The Board of Supervisors requested HRSD to put together a proposal to construct a TFM along routes 198 and 3. The County received the long-term plan in 2007. Engineering for the TFM was completed and the installation of the force main line and construction of three (3) pump stations have been completed within the county.

The Planning Commission was tasked with studying a possible expansion of the sanitary district. The Commission prepared a report to the Board of Supervisors for their consideration as they plan for the future wastewater treatment needs of the Court House Village. The 2005 report noted that if the district was to expand it should do so along Route 14 towards Wards Corner. The plan specifically stated that any possible expansion of the district should be done in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan and should not be done to support additional residential development in the area.

Hampton Roads Sanitary District began searching for a site for a new pump station in 2016. They ultimately chose a vacant parcel immediately adjacent to Moughon's hardware store on Main Street. The new station will increase capacity of HRSD's ability to provide sanitary sewer service to the courthouse area. As of February 2018, HRSD is in the midst of developing a site plan.

The Planning Office performed Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area Determinations for six (6) new septic permits during 2017.

COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP AND PLANNING DEPARTMENT STAFFING

In 2017, the Planning Department had some staff changes, as follows: Mr. Jenkins took over the Director of Planning & Zoning position on January 3, 2017 and continued filling the position of Planner/Wetlands & Marine Projects Coordinator. Mr. James Knighton was hired on May 8, 2017 to fill the Planner/Wetlands and Marine Projects Coordinator position. Susan Thomas continued her position as Environmental Code Compliance Officer and Elizabeth Whitley continued her position as Zoning Technician.

In 2017, the Planning Commission consisted of the following members: Jim Robinson (Chairman); Beth Davis (Vice-Chairman); Thomas Jenkins, Director of Planning & Zoning (Secretary); Bill Whitley, Bill Leary, Tim Hill; Danette Machen and David Rollins. Board of Supervisor member, G. C. Morrow, served as ex-officio.

GOALS FOR 2017 – STATUS

- Planning Commission work with staff to incorporate the Recurrent Flooding Study tools prepared

- by the MPPDC into the County Ordinances – **No progress, will revisit material in 2018.**
- Planning Commission make a recommendation regarding the five-year review of the 2030 Comprehensive Plan. – **Hearing scheduled for March, 20, 2018.**
- Work with the Planning Commission and County Administration to update the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) – **Priority for 2018**
- Consider text amendments to the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances to address various uses that are not enumerated or need to be changed from “by-right” to conditional uses or vice versa. – **Expanded ability to operate an event venue into the Rural district and modified the definition of event venue to be more encompassing. Researched small-scale alcohol production and drafted proposed ordinance language to potentially allow this use within the VMU district. Hearing scheduled for February 20, 2018.**
- Consider refining language addressing home occupations within the Zoning Ordinance to ensure minimal impacts to adjoining property owners. – **No progress. Except for very isolated incidents, staff is not seeing conflicts between home occupations & adjacent property owners.**
- Consider developing a policy addressing the use of travel trailers and other road-ready mobile dwellings in residential zoning districts. – **Explored options but ultimately abandoned any policy development due to building code restrictions on use of such vehicles as a dwelling.**
- Consider developing a policy addressing the use of food trucks in the county. – **Studied by the Commission, and ultimately voted to continue to permit them as home occupations.**

GOALS FOR 2018

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- Planning Commission make a recommendation regarding the five-year review of the 2030 Comprehensive Plan. – **Hearing scheduled for March, 20, 2018.**
- Work with the Planning Commission and County Administration to update the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP).

C.E. Davis

Chair

David Jensen

Secretary