



CITIZENS FOR A BETTER EASTERN SHORE SHORELINE™

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Process Outlined for Shore Sewer Project

By Sue Mastyl

Approximately 100 citizens attended a public meeting on October 24 at the Eastern Shore Community College on the proposed Eastern Shore expansion of the Hampton Roads Sanitation District (HRSD). The project, begun during discussions of major infrastructure needs with former Rep. Scott Taylor in 2018, will expand HRSD's sanitary sewer services to the Shore.

Phase 1 will include a "force main" (4- to 12-inch pipe) along a route from Nassawadox to Accomac, to feed existing sewer collection systems (Nassawadox, Exmore, Melfa, Onley, Accomac, and Onancock) into the existing treatment plant in Onancock (which has excess capacity of over 520,000 gallons per day), with compressor stations as needed; the project is anticipated to cost \$25 million. Future phases could include northern Accomack County (Chincoteague, Atlantic, and Wallops) and southern Northampton County (Eastville to Cape Charles/Cheriton).

HRSD is a political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Virginia created in 1940, which currently serves 1.7 million customers in Eastern Virginia, including 17 counties and cities. They operate 500 miles of collection systems, more than 100 pump stations, and 9 major plants and 7 smaller plants, with a combined capacity of 249 million gallons per day. Because HRSD was established by legislation, the counties and towns involved will

have to petition the 2nd Circuit Court to amend the HRSD Enabling Act to be added to the District.

Petitioning the Court to be added to the HRSD would not commit each locality to being part of the project, but keeps the option open.

The Process

Del. Rob Bloxom and Sen. Lynwood Lewis were both enthusiastic about the project. Del. Bloxom noted that the upcoming session of the General Assembly will include the biennial budget cycle; he and Sen. Lewis are hoping to get \$5 to 6 million in the state budget to address existing debt load for the local wastewater treatment plants in Exmore and Onancock. HRSD cannot take on the debt load when they take over the Onancock plant.

Bloxom pointed out that their budget request will have more weight if they can show a commitment to the project from the towns and counties; everyone agreed to a December 31 deadline for resolutions from both counties and the towns included in Phase 1, petitioning the Court to be added to the HRSD. This would not commit each locality to being part of the project, but keeps the option open. All 19 incorporated towns can be included in the petition at this time if they choose; any town that does not participate now would have to be added later as part of a separate petition,

according to Cela Burge, County Attorney for Accomack County. As of press time, Nassawadox, Onancock, Onley, Parksley, Cheriton, Eastville, and Chincoteague had passed resolutions to be included; both Accomack and Northampton counties will have it on their December agendas. HRSD General Manager Ted Henifin indicated that, although the project would be better with Exmore included, it can proceed with or without Exmore's participation.

Once the petitions have been filed with the Court, the process could take 6 months. There will be a public hearing before the Court acts on the petition.

Robert Crockett, Supervisor for Accomack County, noted that this will help "everyone in both counties," with a positive impact on economic development opportunities.

See Sewer, cont'd on p. 3

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Housing – Affordable for Whom??

...Workforce Priced Out of Communities Where They Work

By Mary Miller

Affordable housing, workforce housing – the needs are the same, but local solutions are very different, especially under Virginia statutes. “Affordable Housing” is legally defined by HUD (US Department of Housing and Urban Development) as housing that costs no more than 30% of the resident’s household income, including utilities. Often referred to as Section 8 housing, it is usually subsidized, income-restricted, and available to poor, very poor, and extremely poor households, including the elderly and handicapped. The Shore has over 2,000 rental units identified as “affordable” – 60% of them are in Northampton.*

Locally, this housing is administered by Accomack-Northampton Regional Housing Authority. The A-NRHA focuses on developing rental housing and manages the regional Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program. The Authority also owns several apartment complexes.

“Workforce Housing,” on the other hand, has no official description or definition, and no local policy, administration, or initiatives. Nationally,



Staff photo

teachers, health care workers, government and public health and safety employees, and hospitality and other service industry workers are unable to find adequate housing they can afford in the communities where they work. This is especially critical in vacation and tourism areas, where mid-priced rental units are often turned into high-end vacation rentals.

“The flooding of the market with high-end rentals is a nationwide phenomenon,” according to Harvard’s Joint Center for Housing Studies. The last decade has seen more than 9 million Americans become new renters, the largest 10-year gain in history, pushing the percentage of households that rent to nearly 40%, the highest level since the 1960s. Workers’ incomes may exceed eligibility for HUD-subsidized housing, and they are often priced out of other rental housing.

Eastern Shore Housing Summit

The regional meeting and workshop held in September pinpointed many regional housing issues – problems were many, solutions were few. The lack of available funding for both “affordable” and “workforce” housing has been an ongoing concern. The need for infrastructure, especially central water/sewer, was stated as a way to make low-cost housing less expensive. Zoning for increased density, for townhouses and rental apartments, was

another point of discussion. Proffers can be offered by developers to localities to include some lower-cost units in exchange for zoning for increased density and multi-family rentals.

But there’s a giant Catch-22 here. Proffers to include some lower-cost units can only be offered during a rezoning process – *if* the developer wants zoning changed to increase density. If zoning already permits multi-family units, then the opportunity for negotiating lower-cost units is lost. Northampton’s Town Edge Zoning Districts permit upzoning to increased density, which could include lower-cost housing proffers. Merely zoning for multi-family units will not guarantee lower-cost housing.

Some Communities Do Manage to Create Workforce Housing

When lack of teacher housing left some school districts unable to attract teachers, places like McDowell County, West Virginia, and Dare County, North Carolina, found ways to provide rental apartments affordable on a teacher’s salary. Through public-private partnerships, corporate and foundation funding, or allocating public funds, local governments are moving forward to provide rental housing for their community’s teachers. These initiatives were possible at the local level in those communities

See **Housing**, cont’d on page 9

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Governor Announces Nation's Strongest Flooding Standards for State Buildings

By Sue Mastyl

On November 15, Gov. Ralph Northam announced Executive Order 45, which creates the Virginia Flood Risk Management Standard, to bolster resilience and ensure compliance with the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). It establishes first-floor elevation, or “freeboard,” standards for all state-owned buildings in coastal and riverine plains authorized for construction after January 1, 2021. These elevation standards incorporate science-based sea level rise projections from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).



Existing state policy already prohibits developing state-owned buildings in flood-prone areas without a variance. With this new policy, once a variance is granted, buildings will need to build to the new Virginia Flood Risk Management Standard, to factor in future sea level rise. The sea level rise projection is based on the NOAA intermediate-high scenario for 2100 (last updated in 2017).

“The actions described in the Executive Order,” said Matthew J. Strickler, Secretary of Natural Resources and the Commonwealth’s Chief Resilience Officer, “set the stage for major investment in planning and resilience across the state. All will benefit from a more resilient Virginia, especially one that harnesses the benefits of natural and nature-based infrastructure to protect people and property whenever possible.”

The freeboard requirements for new state-owned buildings are calculated using 2 numbers – the sea level rise (SLR) freeboard, and the flood plain freeboard (for both the Special Hazard Flood Area, also known as the 100-year flood plain, and the Shaded X Zone, also known as the 500-year flood plain), as follows:

- The SLR freeboard is calculated as 4 feet for SLR inundation, plus 1 foot to account for the difference between mean sea level and mean high water, for a total of 5 feet.
- The flood plain freeboard is established at 3 feet.

This translates to standards as follows:

- Coastal and riverine areas in the flood plain, without any sea level rise – 3 feet
- Areas outside of the flood plain but within SLR inundation areas – 5 feet
- Areas in the flood plain and within SLR inundation areas – 8 feet (3 feet + 5 feet)

The Executive Order also references a report from the

Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences (VIMS) Center for Coastal Resources Management, which recommends a single state-wide projection for sea level rise, using the VIMS projections based on tide-gauge analysis for Sewell’s Point through 2050 and the 2017 NOAA projections based on climate models for time points beyond 2050.* The NOAA 2017 intermediate-high scenario (which the state is using for the Flood Risk Management Standards) projects sea level rise of 6.64 feet by 2100. The report also notes that daily high tides and storm surges will need to be added to the sea level rise projections.

A study from the National Institute of Building Sciences showed that every dollar invested in pre-disaster mitigation saves 5 dollars in costs for riverine flooding and 7 dollars for coastal flooding.**

* [https://www.naturalresources.virginia.gov/media/governorviriniagov/secretary-of-natural-resources/images/1c.-Sea-level-rise-projections-for-Virginia-planning-purposes-\(2\)-FINAL-10_31.pdf](https://www.naturalresources.virginia.gov/media/governorviriniagov/secretary-of-natural-resources/images/1c.-Sea-level-rise-projections-for-Virginia-planning-purposes-(2)-FINAL-10_31.pdf)

** https://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.nibs.org/resource/resmgr/docs/MS_FactSheets_Set.pdf



Sewer, *cont'd from p. 1*

Spencer Murray, Chairman of the Board of Supervisors for Northampton County, raised concerns about citizens outside the incorporated towns, noting that “we have many failing septic systems,” and we have to approach this on a regional basis.

The Plan

Henifin outlined the plan for Phase 1. HRSD will be responsible for the force main, and operation of the Onancock plant, as well as the first 2 miles of pipe from the force main into each town; the town (or county, for unincorporated towns in future phases) will then be responsible for any remaining distance and the collection systems in each community. Henifin also noted that each locality will determine whether hookups will be mandatory or not, as well as the associated fees. Connections to individual customers along the route will not be included in Phase 1.

Henifin also addressed the rate structure, which is based on a 20-year financial plan. Although the rates increase 7% to 9% each year initially, the rate of increase is projected to be lower in subsequent years. He noted that the rates reflect the fact that they “had to ramp way up” across the system to address the new state requirements to reduce the nutrient load for the Chesapeake Bay.



Exmore Shows “Hometown” Love to CBES Between the Waters Bike Tour

Submitted by Clarissa MacGarvey, Town of Exmore

This October, the Town of Exmore had the good fortune to host one of the Shore’s most significant events, the CBES Annual “Between the Waters” Bike Tour. With 1,100 riders registered – and more ready to sign on if organizers were to lift the 1,100 cap – 2019 was the largest Bike Tour to date. From Exmore’s perspective, it could not have been a smoother ride for the participants, more of a boost for local businesses, or more enjoyable for the Exmore team.

Located inland with no visible waterfront, Exmore is often overlooked by visiting tourists in favor of coastal communities with beachfronts and harbors. The Bike Tour presented an opportunity to showcase the town’s key tourism assets: 3 national hotel chains, the open expanses of the Town Park, and a genuine hospitality second to none on the Shore. The community rolled out the Welcome Mat big time; literally unfurling an oversized “Welcome to Exmore” banner in the Town Park and placing “Bikers Welcome” signs in shop windows throughout the downtown business district.

Exmore’s Town Manager Robert Duer, Zoning Administrator Taylor Dukes, and Exmore Police Chief Angelo DiMartino set to work early in the year preparing to meet the most critical challenges for an event of this scope: parking and safety. Together with the CBES team of Donna Bozza, Sue Rice, and Sally Williams, Exmore staff mapped out the logistics and prepared signage.

Several streets near the Bike Tour start point were marked for closing, both to accommodate parking for an estimated 500+ cars and to minimize traffic flow. Law enforcement officers from the Town of Exmore Police Department and the Northampton County Sheriff’s office were assigned to monitor designated crossover points on Lankford Highway (Route 13) and to direct traffic along the section of Main Street leading to the park entrance. Directional arrows were painted on roadways to set riders on the correct course for the various ride distances, and to avoid bottlenecks.

There was an unexpected challenge: on-site registration for riders was scheduled for 7:00 AM; in October, on the East Coast, before sunrise. The 100-milers, eager to pedal the Shore, began arriving at 6:00 AM, in the dark. No worries. Town staff and police teams arrived early, too. In fact, Town Manager Robert Duer manned the park entrance all morning, personally greeting each biker, inquiring about their hometowns, and providing a warm send-off. Taylor Dukes, Chief DiMartino, and others were



Exmore Police Department and Staffers provided the 27th Between the Waters Bike Tour with amazing assistance, including the months prior to the event. One town representative remarked that he had “never seen so much spandex in town.” Pictured from left (in yellow vest) are Taylor Dukes, Director of Utilities & Zoning Administrator, Town Manager Robert Duer, and (in uniform) Police Chief Angelo-Spring DiMartino and Officer Adam Zieger. Photo: Town of Exmore

also on hand to welcome bikers and control traffic – and capture some photos.

This was an exciting event for the town, so digital cameras were clicking everywhere, including overhead via drone. Exmore engaged WESR, the Shore’s radio station, to add a special touch with a live remote broadcast. Despite the early hour, one of WESR’s top on-air personalities, DJ Kelly, covered the entire park with her mike, interviewing cyclists prior to their rides. (Thanks, Kelly.)

In hosting the 2019 CBES Bike Tour, Exmore left no doubts about its positioning as “The Shore’s Hometown.” From small details centered on landscaping and fresh paint to more significant factors like extra restrooms, the entire town staff, including the maintenance team, worked in tandem to create a memorable experience for the cyclists. Town officials even trucked in Virginia Tourism’s iconic LOVE sign for display near the registration area to communicate to the CBES staff, the cyclists, and all the volunteers just how much Exmore “loved” having them.

We can’t wait for the CBES Bike Tour to return! 

27th Bike Tour Sees Sunshine & Sellout

By Donna Bozza

Blessed with perfect weather and a stellar partnership with the host town of Exmore, CBES 27th Between the Waters Bike Tour welcomed 1,100 cyclists on October 26. The sellout event saw bikers from 20 states and the District of Columbia. Over 90% came from off the Eastern Shore, with the majority from other parts of Virginia, followed by MD, PA, NC, and NJ.

Cyclists chose routes of 25, 40, 60, or 100 miles that began in Exmore and ran as far south as Oyster and north to Wachapreague, traversing the Shore's scenic seaside and bayside with a creekside lunch at Cedar Grove Farm in Bayford. Auxiliary events included CBES free Friday Fun Ride, coordinated by volunteer Sue Rice assisted by Ruth Boettcher, and the sold-out post-tour Oyster Roast.

Scores of volunteers rolled up their sleeves to make this weekend happen. And it is their friendly service to our cyclists that rank high on the reasons given why many bikers return year after year.

Contributing greatly to the financial success of the tour were our Co-Presenting Sponsors Sunset Beach Resort and Pender & Coward Attorneys & Counsellors at Law, along with other Bike Tour Sponsors [See full list on pp. 6 and 7].

CBES is also grateful that for the 3rd year, talented local artist Bethany Simpson donated her beautiful coastal folk art for use in promoting the tour, including Bike Tour apparel and a raffle of her original painting.

At the close of this year, our skillful coordinator of 4 years, Sally Richardson Williams, is retiring. Sally made many improvements to the tour and her dedication has long been appreciated by CBES, cyclists and volunteers alike. We are so pleased that she will stay involved and continue to lend her expertise.

And what would *Pedal to Protect Virginia's Eastern Shore* be without those pedaling? Thank you! We look forward to sharing our shores with you again on October 24, 2020.

From a Bike Tour Cyclist

"Thanks for hosting yet another fantastic Between the Waters Bike Tour. This was my 4th in a row. No matter the weather, you host a memorable event. Friendly volunteers, low traffic, gorgeous scenes, the perfect number of rest stops, and well-marked routes contribute to a special yearly event. Last year was an adventure with high winds and water. This year was epic fun with wonderful cyclists and locals. The lunch and the lunch locale were excellent. For the 35 or so of us who attended the after-ride party at The Jackspot at Sunset Beach Hotel, this was another

element of wonderful Eastern Shore hospitality. The spread of food and drinks was abundant and tasty. The place looked like a Caribbean resort! Many, many thanks for doing this year after year. No wonder the event always sells out. See you again soon!"

Jon Bekenstein, Richmond, VA

From a Bike Tour Volunteer

"Just wanted to thank you for all you did to make this the best Bike Tour CBES has ever done! I was passing out T-shirts yesterday in Exmore and all the comments were so positive! Routes were really well marked, local people were all so friendly and helpful, the police did a great job, the food at lunch was fantastic, the routes were much more picturesque this year, and the T-shirts were the best looking ever! Not to mention the great weather you provided! 😊 People wanted to sign up for next year already! So thank you again for all your hard work and expertise! Now take a much deserved rest!"

Sharon Whitman, Cape Charles, VA

From a Bike Tour Sponsor/Shore Business Owner:

"I want to tell you we are seeing record numbers of bikers at the winery these last 2 years due in large part to your serving the wine at your event. I know sponsorship helps, but nothing like tasting! It's a huge positive for our business so please feel free to share that with your Board. Your guests are spending a lot of money on the Shore!"

Mills Wehner, Chatham Vineyards 🦅



Riders show off the commemorative 2019 Bike Tour Tee, with its colorful image donated once again by popular Shore artist Bethany Simpson, whose artwork can be seen on Facebook and is for sale at Lemon Tree Gallery, Cape Charles, and The Machipongo Trading Company on Route 13 in Machipongo. Photo: Town of Exmore



Sponsors and Volunteers

Without generous sponsors, CBES Bike Tour & Oyster Roast would not be in its 27th year. This major fundraiser allows CBES to continue its work – protecting what you love about the Shore. As one of the biggest Shore ecotourism events, the Bike Tour also has a positive economic impact on towns and businesses, while introducing visitors to our coastal gem and showing why its protection is so vital.

Please support those who support our community!

Sponsors

Bike Tour Funding Provided in Part by

Northampton County Tourism Infrastructure Grant

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Seaside Ecotours
Willie Randall, Edward Jones

She Makes Us Look So Good

Heartfelt thanks to Shore artist Bethany Simpson, whose gorgeous art graced our promotional materials and bike apparel. She graciously donated her painting, too, helping CBES to raise much-needed funds.

Oyster Roast Donors

Cherrystone Aqua Farms
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The Ugly Oyster Man
Wescoat Nurseries

It Takes a Village

Every effort has been made to acknowledge our volunteers/helpers; we appreciate each and every one of you! Please let us know if there are additions to this list or if we have misspelled any names.

Special Thanks to Those Who Shared Their Spaces

Phil Custis
Jim and Elizabeth Long, Cedar Grove Farm

St. George's Episcopal Church
The Nature Conservancy
Town of Wachapreague
Travis Chapel

Bike Tour Volunteers

Maegan Durham
Patty Durham
Kathy Durmick
Lee Ann Fick
Mary Floyd
Eastern Shore Ham Radio Operators
Eastern Shore Medical Reserve Corps
Eleanor Gordon
Nancy Gormley
Thor Gormley
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Mike Peirson
Gary Shrieves
Michelle Shrieves
Arthur Upshur
Carole Upshur
Courtney Van Clief
Margaret Van Clief



Photo: Town of Exmore

Sharon Whitman

Doug Williams

Town of Exmore

Robert Duer, Town Manager

Chief Angelo-Spring DiMartino and the Exmore Police Department

Taylor Dukes, Director of Utilities & Zoning Administrator

Clarice MacGarvey, Marketing Consultant

Friday Fun Ride

Ruth Boettcher

Sue Rice

GPS Mapping

Ruth Boettcher

Sue Rice

Route Markers

Meriwether Payne

Sue Rice

SAG Crew on the Road

Buzz Carragher

Buck Doughty

John Kolos

Josh Lattimore

Brooke Rodgers

Oyster Roast Volunteers

Nan Arpino

Richard Ayres

Jim Baugh

Bob Copper

Melody Copper

Chad Davis

Karen Jolly Davis

Dot Field

Eleanor Gordon

Susan Harris

Traci Johnson

Wendy Martin

Chris Morgan

Sarah Morgan

Bill Mytnik

Barbara O'Hare

Bill O'Hare

Meriwether Payne

Mimi Sadler

Bev Steffey

Arthur Upshur

Camden Whitehead

Dessert Bar Bakers

Martina Coker

Eleanor Gordon

Laurie Jones

Mary Miller

Sarah Morgan

Ann Snyder



Corn Funk Revue rocked the barn at the post-Bike Tour Oyster Roast at historic Cherry Grove Farm, thanks to property owner John Wescoat. Staff photo

We got by with a little – or a lot – of help from our friends

Cherrystone Aqua-Farms

Corn Funk Revue

Janet's Cafe

Machipongo Clam Shack

Roger Munz

R.E.I.

Seaside Ecotours

Wachapreague Inn

Watts Photography

The 27th Between the Waters Bike Tour was dedicated to the memory of John "Jack" Humphreys – a true friend to the Shore.



Above: A sunny day and a field of cotton provide a serene backdrop for Bike Tour participants. Staff photo



At left: Parents of Isabella "Izzy," Debra and Brent Heizer, are veterans of BTW Bike Tour but this is the 11-year old Yorkshire Terrier's first Shore cruise. Debra relates that fellow cyclists love having their picture taken with her and the sight of the little furry girl provides encouragement to tired riders. Submitted photo

RECYCLING CORNER

Potpourri

Here are a few key tips to remember in your recycling –

- *Lose the cap* – taking the cap off a plastic bottle will ensure that the bottle is empty, and allow it to be properly crushed. Dispose of the cap in the trash.
- *Shredded paper doesn't work* – it's a contaminant, and will clog the machines. Dispose of it in the trash.
- *Choose beer cans over bottles* – glass has significant issues in recycling right now, whereas an aluminum can will be recycled and back on the market in 60 days.
- *Take the pledge* – every day, 500,000 plastic straws, 1.3 million disposable cups, 2.8 million plastic bags, and 1.44 million plastic water bottles are used and thrown away. Every day, 44 million pounds of trash are dumped into the ocean. Take the pledge to #QuitSingleUse at unitedbyblue.com/pages/quitsingleuse with their 24-hour plastic-free survival guide. Try one new step every month.

SOURCE: Hafner K. The state of recycling in Virginia: It may not be going where you think. The Virginian-Pilot, Nov 7, 2019.

Don't Forget Annual Giving

The Shore needs CBES; CBES needs the Shore.

As the holiday season gains fever pitch, please take a moment to contribute to CBES.

CBES, with your help, can continue our 30-plus years of keeping the community informed on critical issues through our monthly *ShoreLine* and pertinent emails encouraging citizens to actively engage in the Shore's governance. With you, we can assist citizens in making informed decisions about their communities' future, such as with CBES trio of 2019 Candidates Forums, and continue our responsibility as your local government watchdog.

CBES celebrates our diversity at the annual Community Unity Day. And we walk the talk – or should we say, cycle it – as we bring sustainable economic development to our businesses and small towns across the Shore, through the now-27-year-old Between the Waters Bike Tour.

Go to www.cbcs.org to donate, or you may send a tax-deductible check with your contact info to CBES, P.O. Box 882, Eastville, VA 23347. Please give as generously as you can; all donations are welcome!

Help us protect what you love about the Shore.

Northampton County

Comprehensive Plan Update

Staff Report

Northampton County's first Community Workshops to collect public input for the county's Comprehensive Plan review were held in September. Over 100 people attended the 5 workshops. Attendees considered the Plan's Vision Statement for the next 20 years as they discussed the strengths and challenges faced by the county in preparation for more discussions about strategies for future planning.

Consensus of community strengths among attendees was fairly even across the 5 meetings. Natural resource protection and a rural, small-town lifestyle were highest on the list of priorities. The strength of local industries, agri- and aquaculture, tourism, small business and entrepreneurship, and the county's historical and cultural heritage were next. Outdoor recreation, research opportunities, the current Comprehensive Plan and Zoning, and the diversity of residents were also cited as strengths.

Future challenges noted were also similar across the 5 meetings. Education and workforce training needs, and affordable and workforce housing shortages, were the priorities. The need for more businesses to provide jobs, continuing to protect natural resources, water quality and the aquifer, health care access, the need for broadband and other infrastructure, income disparity and poverty, population and school enrollment decline, coastal resilience, maintaining poultry house and other protective setbacks, county revenue and debt, zoning, transportation, a seasonal economy, and the need for a skilled, reliable workforce were all discussed.

Vision Statements often are partly wish-lists. County government can plan realistically for many, but not all, of these issues. Except for funding the school system, the county has no authority over school administration, including workforce training. Providing low-cost housing (*see article on page 2*) appears problematic under current conditions. Competing with Hampton Roads and its urban resources to attract new businesses and year-round residents to a rural setting will continue to be a marketing challenge. But county planning and policies can provide local and regional support for core industries and broadband expansion; enhance transportation and health care access; control expenditures and debt; and protect coastal areas, rural lifestyle, property values, and natural resources from natural and man-made impacts.

Community survey results and input from another community workshop will be compiled by the Berkley Group, posted on the county website, and used to draft the Comprehensive Plan update. *ShoreLine* will provide timely information. The draft will be available by mid-2020.





CBF Leaves Fox Island

The Environmental Education Center on Fox Island, owned by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) for the last 4 decades, has closed, due to safety concerns over erosion and rising sea levels. The closure “illustrates the real and immediate threat climate change poses to [the Bay’s] island and coastal communities on the frontlines,” according to CBF’s blog post. More than 70% of the island’s land area has disappeared in the last 50 years due to sea level rise and erosion; the island has gone from 426 acres 250 years ago to 34 acres today. “Fox Island has survived numerous major hurricanes and frozen winters, but it cannot survive sea level rise and climate change,” noted Bill Portlock, senior educator at the center.

Fox Island is located 6 miles southwest of Crisfield, MD, and 9 miles west of Saxis, on the edge of Cedar Island Wildlife Management Area. Tens of thousands of students and teachers have visited the Center, learning valuable lessons about the Bay’s ecology, wildlife, and vegetation. “Fox Island was transformative for the kids and their teachers, [getting] them out of their routine. They understood the Bay as a living thing,” said Cindy Adams Dunn, Pennsylvania Secretary of Conservation and Natural Resources, who first visited the island in 1981.

CBF is offering the property for sale as-is (34 acres of marsh and islands, with docks, a utility shed, and a large timber lodge), with bids due by November 15, and a selection to be made by December 15. 

CBES Membership 2020

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Housing, cont’d from p. 2

because of lack of restrictions at the state level. But not in Virginia.

Workforce Housing Constraints in Virginia

By and large, Virginia towns, cities, and counties are prevented by statute from developing their own Affordable/Workforce Housing Ordinances – rules that would allow local governments to codify incentives and development flexibility to encourage mixed-use, variable-density, moderately priced units, especially rentals.

Virginia Code § 15.2-2304 allows the governing body of any county where the urban county executive form of government or the county manager plan of government is in effect, or only the Counties of Albemarle and Loudoun, and the Cities of Alexandria and Fairfax, to amend zoning ordinances to provide for affordable housing. All other localities are required to use the unwieldy state model Ordinance. Because of the large scale and additional bureaucracy required, the addition of land costs for each unit, plus a guaranteed return on each “affordable” unit in a development (instead of profit on the development as a whole), this template is essentially unworkable in rural areas.

A locality can, through referendum, create a Housing and Redevelopment Authority, with independent taxing authority, to create and maintain publicly owned housing. It’s a long, complicated process, involving land acquisition or condemnation, infrastructure, bureaucratic restrictions, building costs, and administration and maintenance of the new housing. This is generally an urban solution, using public money, to solve issues of blight and inadequate housing.

Why the State Roadblocks to Local Housing Solutions?

Virginia state lawmakers, the ones who vote on housing policy, are lobbied by the home-building industry – an activity promoted on its website**: “The Home Builders Association of Virginia (HBAV) is a 3,200-member, state-wide organization of home builders and firms that provide products and services to the home-building industry. HBAV dedicates approximately 60% of its annual resources to representing the home-building industry before state lawmakers and state regulators. Each year on average, HBAV’s experienced lobbyists act on over 150 pieces of legislation introduced by the Virginia General Assembly that would affect the housing climate in Virginia.”

State regulations, combined with constant lobbying by the home-building lobby, appear to have been a successful deterrent to rural government’s ability to develop workforce or other low-cost rental housing options.

*<https://affordablehousingonline.com/>

** <https://www.hbav.com/advocacy/government-affairs/> 

Citizens for a Better Eastern Shore
P. O. Box 882
Eastville, VA 23347-0882

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INFORM, ENGAGE, EMPOWER!

Check your label – if it doesn't show '19 or Life, you need to renew (cbes.org).

**NORTHAMPTON
SURVEY STILL OPEN!**

All who care about the future of Northampton County are invited to complete a short survey to provide input for the upcoming **Comprehensive Plan Update**. Please go to:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NorthamptonCo>

Participants can complete the survey online or print it out and submit by mail. Your help is important to the future of the county, so do it today!

*The survey is available until
December 31,
so please add your voice!*



Community Calendar

Note: Please verify times and places prior to traveling to meetings.

Accomack County

757-787-5700

www.co.accomack.va.us

- 1st Wed **Board of Zoning Appeals**
10 AM, Accomac
- 2nd Wed **Planning Commission (PC)**
7 PM, Accomac
- 3rd Tues **School Board**
6:30 PM, Accomac
- 3rd Wed **Board of Supervisors (BOS)**
5 PM, Accomac
- 4th Tues **PC Work Session**
7 PM, Accomac
- 4th Thur **Wetlands Board**
10 AM, Accomac

Northampton County

757-678-0440

www.co.northampton.va.us

- 1st Tues **Board of Zoning Appeals**
10 AM, Eastville
- 1st Tues **Planning Commission (PC)**
7 PM, Eastville
- 2nd Tues **Board of Supervisors (BOS)**
6 PM, Eastville
- 3rd Wed **Wetlands Board**
Meets as needed, Eastville
- 3rd Wed **PC Work Session**
5 PM, Eastville
- 4th Tues **BOS Work Session**
5 PM, Eastville
- 4th Tues **School Board**
6 PM, Machipongo

CBES and Other Activities

- 1st Wed **VIMS Public Seminar**
7:30 PM, Wachapreague
- 3rd Tues **ES Ground Water Committee**
10 AM, Accomac
- 3rd Tues **CBES Board Meeting**
7 PM, Eastville or Belle Haven

**For membership and other
CBES information:
www.cbes.org**