

RICHMOND REGIONAL PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION
Minutes of Meeting
March 12, 2009

Members/Alternates Present

Willie L. Bennett (M) County of Henrico
Malvern R. “Rudy” Butler (M).....County of Goochland
Deborah B. Coates (A).....County of Hanover
Douglas G. Conner (M)City of Richmond
Robert R. Cosby (M).....County of Powhatan
Timothy W. Cotman, Sr., Chairman (M)..... County of Charles City
James B. Donati (M), Treasurer..... County of Henrico
Marleen K. Durfee (M).....County of Chesterfield
Evan Fabricant (M).....County of Hanover
Richard W. Glover (M)..... County of Henrico
John E. Gordon, Jr. (M)County of Hanover
Kathy C. Graziano (M), Vice Chairman.....City of Richmond
James M. Holland (M)County of Chesterfield
Dorothy Jaeckle (M)County of Chesterfield
E. Martin Jewell (M).....City of Richmond
Bonnie-Leigh Jones (M) County of Henrico
David A. Kaechele (M)..... County of Henrico
Patricia S. O’Bannon (M) County of Henrico
C. Harold Padgett (M).....County of Hanover
Faye O. Prichard (M)Town of Ashland
George K. Roarty (M).....County of Chesterfield
Charles R. Samuels (M).....City of Richmond
Robert R. Setliff (M).....County of Hanover
Randall R. Silber (A) County of Henrico
Millard D. Stith (A).....County of Chesterfield
Frank J. Thornton (M)..... County of Henrico
Stran L. Trout (M), Secretary County of New Kent
Joseph B. Walton (M)County of Powhatan
Arthur S. Warren (M)County of Chesterfield

Members Absent

Karin Carmack (M).....County of Powhatan
Daniel A. Gecker (M)County of Chesterfield
Russell J. Gulley (M)County of Chesterfield
Courtney G. Hyers (M).....County of Goochland
John C. Grier (M).....City of Richmond
Beverley C. Lacy (M)City of Richmond
Brenda L. “Sam” Snyder (M) County of New Kent

Others Present

John R. Amos..... RRPDC Legal Counsel
Nora AmosTown of Ashland
John T. BentonCitizen, Chesterfield County
Tim Bowles..... no affiliation listed
W.R. Britton, Jr.....Citizen, County of Charles City
Carolyn CiosCounty of Powhatan
Jerilynn Grigsby..... Citizen, County of Henrico
George Homewood..... County of New Kent
Dwight Jones.....City of Richmond
Bill Pantele..... Citizen, City of Richmond
Lane Ramsey.....County of Goochland
Mike Schnurman..... County of Henrico

Staff Present

Robert A. Crum, Jr..... Executive Director
Jo A. Evans Assistant Executive Director
Julie H. Fry..... Executive Secretary
Allyson Finchum.....Principal Planner
Jin Lee.....Senior Planner
Daniel N. LysyDirector, Transportation
Sarah Smith.....Senior Planner
Jackie S. Stewart..... Director, Planning/IS
Peter M. Sweetland..... Finance and Contracts Administrator
Matt Weaver..... Intern
Kathy Wright Intern
Lee YoltonPrincipal Planner

Call to Order

Chairman Cotman called the regularly scheduled March 12, 2009 RRPDC meeting to order at approximately 1:00 p.m. in the RRPDC board room. He then led the Commission members in the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

I. ADMINISTRATION

A. Certification by Commission Executive Director of Meeting Quorum

Mr. Crum certified that a quorum of members was present.

B. Requests for Additions or Changes in Order of Business

Chairman Cotman asked if there were any additions or changes to be made to the agenda.

The Chairman recognized Ms. O'Bannon. Ms. O'Bannon said she would like to make a comment regarding the meeting minutes. She said they are very complete. She said the purpose of meeting minutes is so that anyone can refer back to the minutes to read what discussion or decision took place during a particular meeting. She feels very confident that should anyone need to refer back to minutes of RRPDC meetings, they will be able to know what was done and said. She said the minutes are excellent and very complete.

Chairman Cotman thanked Ms. O'Bannon for her comments.

There being no changes to make to the agenda, the agenda was accepted as printed.

C. Open Public Comment Period

Chairman Cotman asked if there was anyone from the public in attendance who wished to make a comment. He reminded speakers that their time is limited to three minutes.

Chairman Cotman recognized Mr. John Benton.

Mr. Benton said he is a citizen of Chesterfield County and has been a resident of the area for almost 35 years. He stated he would like to make a suggestion for Commission action. He said on several occasions he has addressed the board on its need to do things correctly. He said it would be appropriate for the Commission to comply with the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia under Section 15.2-4209 of the Regional Cooperation Act (hereafter, "Act"). Mr. Benton read from the Act and requested that the portion he read be included in the written meeting minutes:

...Each planning district commission shall prepare a strategic plan for the guidance of the district. The plan shall concern those elements which are of importance in more than one of the localities within the district, as distinguished from matters of only local importance. The plan shall include regional goals and objectives, strategies to meet those goals and objectives, and mechanisms for measuring progress toward the goals and objectives. The strategic plan shall include those subjects necessary to promote the orderly and efficient development of the physical, social and economic elements of the district such as transportation, housing, economic development and environmental management. The plan may be divided into parts or sections as the planning district commission deems desirable. In developing the regional strategic plan, the planning district commission shall seek input from a wide range of organizations in the region, including local governing bodies, the business community and citizen organizations.

Mr. Benton said he would further request that the Commission pass a resolution authorizing the Executive Director to prepare a resolution requiring the Commission to develop a strategic plan according to what he had just read from the Act.

He said it is very important to note that he is the only citizen who attends Commission meetings, and it would be very helpful if there was a document to show what the Commission does and where it is going 5 to 7 years from now. He said this is good management and good common sense.

Mr. Benton thanked members for their time.

The Chairman recognized Ms. Prichard, who said she would like to respond to Mr. Benton's comments.

Ms. Prichard noted that the Commission does have a list of priorities which should be considered a strategic plan. She said the Commission is already doing what Mr. Benton is suggesting. Ms. Prichard said regional partners have been brought in as the Commission is participating in the Capital Region Collaborative. This involves both business and community partners. She said this strategic plan of priorities and initiatives had been developed in a joint effort of the Small and Large Jurisdictions Committees last year.

Mr. Crum said he would concur with what Ms. Prichard said. He noted he would be glad to share the information with Mr. Benton. Mr. Crum said from an organizational standpoint, what is guiding the agency is the list of regional initiatives as identified by the jurisdictional committees. He said Mr. Benton is correct from the broader nature with regard to working with the community. Involvement with the Collaborative, as it continues, is a strategic planning process and is being geared toward community involvement. He said this is a part of the strategic plan that is missing. Mr. Crum said the Commission is committed to moving forward with this. He said this will be addressed in upcoming reports on the Collaborative as this will involve considerable community involvement.

Mr. Benton replied that he does agree there is a two-year task plan that is very complete and he follows the status of these tasks. He said the problem with this document is that it only covers two years and a strategic plan should cover 5 to 7 or more years. He said the strategic plan that is being worked on currently is not available for him to read. He has asked for a copy of the strategic plan on many occasions and has not received one. Mr. Benton said common sense would dictate that documentation be made of what is being done. He said he would be glad to assist with the writing of a strategic plan on a pro bono basis.

Mr. Crum said he will share the regional initiatives documents with Mr. Benton, as well as information regarding the Capital Region Collaborative.

Mr. Gordon said what is now in place and what has been done over the past several months meet the requirements of the Act. He said it is also important to note that, on its own initiative, the Commission determined to work with the business community to create a strategic plan for the Region. Mr. Gordon said in terms of an actual document, he thinks one will be developed as the process goes forward.

There being no other requests from the public to address the Commission, the Chairman closed the public comment period.

D. Chairman's Report

Chairman Cotman introduced and welcomed the Mayor of Richmond, Dwight Jones, to the meeting. Mayor Jones said he was happy to be able to attend today.

Chairman Cotman recognized Mr. Butler, who introduced Lane Ramsey, the Interim County Administrator for Goochland County.

Chairman Cotman also introduced Willie Bennett, the new Citizen Representative to the Commission from Henrico County. Mr. Bennett replaces Ms. Grigsby, whose term on the Commission expired last month.

E. Approval of Minutes – February 12, 2009 Meeting

Chairman Cotman asked Mr. Trout to present this item.

Mr. Trout noted the minutes were included in the agenda book. Mr. Trout made a motion that the minutes be approved as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Graziano. There being no further discussion, the motion carried.

F. Approval of January 2009 Financial Reports

Chairman Cotman asked Mr. Donati to present this item.

Mr. Donati stated the financial report is included in the agenda book under Tab 2. There being no discussion, on motion made by Mr. Donati and seconded by Ms. Graziano, the January 2009 financial reports were accepted for audit as presented.

G. Executive Director's Report

Mr. Crum brought the members' attention to the monthly staff activity report which is included in the agenda book under Tab 3.

Mr. Crum noted that an orientation meeting will be held for new Commission members within the next few weeks. Information will be sent out next week regarding potential meeting dates.

Next month on the Commission agenda there will be an item related to the formation of a regional grants warehouse. Jo Evans is heading this effort and has begun to contact localities to determine who in each locality is responsible for grant writing.

There will also be an update on the broad scope of the federal economic stimulus package and its potential funding opportunities.

RRPDC staff is working with public utilities directors in each locality to obtain data related to the Regional Infrastructure Initiative – water and sewer facilities and cell phone towers. This project is moving forward.

Mr. Crum reported that the Capital Region Collaborative Organizing Team met on February 20. RRPDC is staffing this effort as the Team moves forward. The next meeting will be held on March 20. The Team is beginning to strategize how to go out in an organized manner to obtain public input. The Team envisions this will produce a regional strategic plan. Mr. Crum said a formal presentation will be made to Commission members within the next couple of months.

As a reminder for new Commission members, a camera for photos has been set up in the adjacent meeting room. On the RRPDC website, there is a section where Commission members' photos appear with a brief biography. Peter Sweetland will take the photos this afternoon. If any other members of the Commission would like an updated photo, please see Peter.

Ms. O'Bannon asked who would be contacted in the localities to work on the grants warehouse project.

Ms. Evans responded that at this time she is circulating information to county administrators and managers on information being received regarding the federal stimulus package. She is also asking who on each local government staff would be responsible for obtaining grant information. It would be the goal of the RRPDC to establish a regular meeting of these contacts in order to share grant information and to assist with grant writing as needed. This is an initiative that was identified by the Small Jurisdictions Committee. This effort happened to coincide with the federal stimulus legislation.

Ms. O'Bannon noted that the top three MPO transportation priorities already meet the federal requirements to receive stimulus funding.

II. OLD BUSINESS

A. Jurisdictional Committees Reports

Chairman Cotman asked Ms. Prichard and Mr. Gordon if they would like to give reports from the Jurisdictions Committees.

Ms. Prichard reported that the committee met on March 10. The regular meeting date for the committee is the second Tuesday of each month. During the meeting, members of the committee received an update on the list of priorities as established by the Commission. There are no recommendations from the committee at this time, but members of the committee will continue to receive updates and have discussions on the initiatives. Recommendations will be made as warranted.

Mr. Gordon noted the Large Jurisdiction Committee met on March 5. The committee members received a similar report from Mr. Crum on the status of the initiatives. All members were pleased with the progress made to date and have no recommendations. The committee meets on the first Thursday of each month.

Ms. Graziano added that Mayor Jones had also attended the meeting on March 5.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. Presentation of Resolutions of Appreciation

Chairman Cotman noted that during its February 12 meeting, the Executive Committee approved Resolutions of Appreciation for outgoing Commission members. He presented resolutions to Mr. William Britton (Charles City County); Mr. William Pantele (City of Richmond); and Ms. Jerilynn Grigsby (Henrico County). Each member thanked the Commission for the opportunity to serve. Chairman Cotman offered his thanks on behalf of Commission members.

Staff will forward resolutions to those members who were not able to attend the meeting: Ms. Ellen Robertson (City of Richmond); Ms. Delores McQuinn (City of Richmond); and Mr. Ray Jernigan (Henrico County).

B. Regional Green Infrastructure Grant: Year 2 of 3

Mr. Crum said the information on grants would be presented by Jackie Stewart, Director of the Planning and Information Services Division.

Ms. Stewart noted the Regional Green Infrastructure grant is federally funded through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. RRPDC has partnered with the Crater Planning District Commission to work on this project. This grant will allow the project to continue forward to extend technical

assistance in green infrastructure planning to member localities and further analyze the function of a possible green infrastructure network in the Region.

Staff would recommend the Commission authorize the Executive Director to complete and submit the proposed grant.

Ms. O'Bannon asked for the definition of green infrastructure. Ms. Stewart said green infrastructure related to areas that are not developed, such as parks and other open areas.

Ms. Graziano made a motion that the resolution be approved. The motion was seconded by Ms. Prichard.

Ms. O'Bannon asked how the monies would be used. Ms. Stewart said during year 2, the two PDCs would work with local staffs to implement green infrastructure strategies at the local level as determined by local staffs. Work will also be done to study a specific urban area and work with that community on green infrastructure planning.

Mr. Holland asked when the grant money would be received. Ms. Stewart said this is a federal grant so the money would be received at the beginning of the federal fiscal year, which is October 1.

There being no further discussion, the motion carried.

C. Regional Community Development Block Grant Priorities

Ms. Stewart reported this is an annual grant that offers funding assistance to non-entitlement localities across the state. In the Richmond Region, these localities are the Town of Ashland and the Counties of Charles City, Goochland, Hanover, New Kent, and Powhatan. Localities may submit projects that benefit low- to moderate-income persons. At this time, only Charles City County has submitted a project.

Ms. Prichard made a motion that the proposed resolution be approved. The motion was seconded by Ms. Graziano.

Mr. Butler asked what criteria is used to award grant monies. He said Goochland County has applied many times and has never been awarded any of the funding. Ms. Stewart said the Department of Housing and Community Development uses a fiscal stress index developed annually by the Commission on Local Government. Unfortunately, Goochland County is relatively affluent as compared to other rural localities. Also, the State looks for a small land area or community where work can be focused. Most rural areas in the Richmond Region are spread out, and it's difficult to identify small areas with at least 51% of low- to moderate-income residents.

There was a question asking if these small areas were the same as census tracts. Ms. Stewart said these are not the same as the small areas are not well defined by set boundaries.

There being no further discussion, the motion carried.

D. Virginia Department of Transportation Planning Work Program Grant

Ms. Stewart stated this is a rural transportation planning program which is parallel to the urban transportation planning program. There are requirements for a rural long range transportation plan; this is year 3 of 4 being planned. The grant funds will be used to continue work already underway in Goochland and Powhatan Counties and for upcoming projects in Charles City and New Kent Counties. Public hearings are being scheduled for all projects.

Mr. Butler made a motion that the resolution be approved. Ms. Graziano seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, the motion carried.

Mr. Crum introduced the project manager for this work task, Allyson Finchum, who is a Principal Planner in the Planning Division.

E. Coastal Zone Management Work Program Grant

Ms. Stewart continued by reporting that this grant is an annual grant used to work with local governments on coastal projects such as the impervious surface inventory and in support of the Commission's Environmental Technical Advisory Committee by providing training and education opportunities. The grant provides \$30,000 and requires an equal match of \$30,000 from the RRPDC.

Mr. Bennett made a motion that the resolution be approved. The motion was seconded by Ms. Graziano. There being no further discussion, the motion carried.

F. 2010 US Census Coordination Update

Mr. Crum introduced Sarah Smith, Senior Planner in the Planning Division. Ms. Smith is the project manager for the work staff is coordinating with the U.S. Census Bureau. Ms. Smith gave an overview on what staff has been working on with regard to this project.

Staff has initiated work on the 2010 decennial census, *Census 2010 Participant Statistical Areas Program (PSAP)*, that is currently underway across the country.

RRPDC staff received training provided by the Census Bureau specific to the PSAP update. In its role as the U.S. Census Regional Clearinghouse, the RRPDC acts as the PSAP primary participant for the Richmond Region, serves as the main

liaison between the Census and constituent local governments in coordinating the PSAP update, and serves as technical advisors to local government staffs as the census geographies included in the PSAP are processed and updated.

Currently RRPDC staff is soliciting local government review of possible boundary changes to three Census geographies: census tracts, census block groups, and census designated places.

Mr. Kaechele asked who compiled information collected during the American Community Survey (ACS). Ms. Smith said the Census Bureau compiles this information and it is collected during the course of the year all over the country. A certain percent of the total year end result will be surveyed each month. These are put into a data base monthly and at the end of the year, an average is compiled. She said this does not affect funding. The decennial census is used to determine funding.

Mr. Thornton asked if the ACS is as accurate as the decennial census. Ms. Smith said the ACS does have a high margin of error which is being addressed. A workbook has been released to help local governments know how to best use ACS information. The ACS counts 2.5% of the population nationwide on an annual basis; the decennial census counts 100% every ten years.

Mr. Thornton expressed concern that this inaccuracy would affect funding. Ms. Smith said the ACS is not used for funding purposes; the decennial census is used to determine funding.

Mr. Holland asked how many Census offices were located in the Richmond area. Ms. Smith said she knew of only the one Richmond office and would let members know if any others opened.

Ms. O'Bannon asked how the ACS count areas were determined. Ms. Smith said she would find out and get back to Ms. O'Bannon with that information.

Mr. Setliff asked how county staffs are involved in the process. Ms. Smith said local staffs are contacted during the boundary reviews so actual boundary lines are not changed.

Mr. Jewell asked how undercounts will be addressed. Ms. Smith said there have been concerns regarding small sample sizes and resulting margins of error. These are being addressed by the Census Bureau.

She said she will research some of the more detailed questions and make the information available to members.

G. Chickahominy River Recreational Study Update

Mr. Crum noted that just over a year ago, RRPDC staff completed this study and wanted members of the Commission to receive an update on the study findings. Ms. Smith will also give this presentation.

Ms. Smith stated that in 2007, the RRPDC staff completed the Chickahominy River Recreational Access Study as a special project for the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program. The study provides the foundation for efforts to preserve existing access to the river by canoeists, kayakers, anglers, and bird watchers, as well as to investigate the potential addition of future public access sites to create a designated water trail on the river. This report is intended for use by government agencies, non-profits, and anyone interested in planning and promoting public access along this unique river in the Counties of Charles City, Hanover, Henrico, New Kent, and the City of Richmond. The study focuses on the watershed and river corridor level, and concludes with recommendations to improve recreational access for this shared natural resource.

Mr. Fabricant asked if the cost of the study was known. Mr. Trout stated there were actually three ongoing studies on the Chickahominy River. He said the one presented today is the only one to have been completed to date. One is being completed on the Captain John Smith Water Trail, which had originally included only the Chesapeake Bay. New Kent, Charles City, and James City Counties have joined with the National Park Service to complete this. This will be done in three phases: the navigable portion of the river, the portion above Walkers Dam (Chickahominy Lake), and the Chickahominy swamp area. Mr. Trout said these studies will help increase tourism and recreational use along with bringing increased awareness to environmental issues. He said his brother is also doing research on the river for a series of books he writes on canals and rivers. The books are written at no cost to the localities.

Mr. Kaechele asked about access points along the river. He wanted to know the location of the first entry point as indicated on a map used in the presentation. Ms. Smith indicated this is Creighton Road. She said in the report there is a description of each entry point. She said not all entry points are public; some are commercial, for profit access points. Ms. Smith said that all access points are open to the public; however, some charge a fee. Ms. Smith said the report is available on the RRPDC website.

Mr. Roarty asked if there were any other studies ongoing. Ms. Smith said there were no others that she was aware of at this time but she would check on that information as well as cost information on the original study.

There was a question on how this study could interface with the green infrastructure initiative. Ms. Smith said the access points were noted during the data collection stage of the green infrastructure initiative.

Mr. Holland asked if there would be any follow up to this study. Mr. Trout responded that the John Smith Trail should have driving and boating tours documented for public information in addition to road signs.

Mr. Crum added that this would be an effort that could be promoted by the Capital Region Collaborative. The Collaborative could “super charge” the cooperation that has already taken place in the study effort. There may be a work group on the environment formed through the Collaborative. This group will be asked to identify existing opportunities based on existing resource studies, such as the one on the Chickahominy River. The Collaborative can help pull together those persons who have common interests to make the initiatives happen.

Chairman Cotman asked if housing development opportunities along the river had been included in the study. Ms. Smith said this was not included. Mr. Trout said he didn’t believe this had been taken into account in any of the studies. He agreed this could have an environmental impact.

Mr. Jewell asked if any studies had been done along the James River. Ms. O’Bannon noted the Department of Conservation and Recreation had previously done a study of the James River and a brochure was available. The John Smith Trail was included in this study, but the John Smith Trail did not include the upper reaches of the James.

Chairman Cotman indicated the VCU Rice Center is also involved in gathering information on the James River.

Ms. Durfee asked if there was a reason public access points were only on the lower portions of the river and if there were plans to develop access points on the upper and middle areas of the river. Mr. Fabricant noted that the upper and middle regions of the river were shallow and too swampy for easy access.

Ms. Graziano suggested that future development of the rivers should be studied.

Mr. Crum said planners are now noting impervious surfaces and development trends that will show how changes are taking place along waterways.

H. Legislative Update

Chairman Cotman asked Mr. Crum to update members on activities at the General Assembly with regard to the RRPDC Legislative Agenda.

Mr. Crum said he would not review all legislation that had been included in the report given during last month’s Commission meeting. He said he would like to focus on the Regional Transportation Authority legislation that had been introduced in the Senate (SB 1534).

Mr. Crum said this legislation was different from what had been discussed by the RRPDC last summer in that only two localities were identified as core participants – the City of Richmond and Chesterfield County. Other member jurisdictions of the RRPDC would have the option to join the Authority with all powers and privileges. One funding stream was identified – a grantors tax that would be 40¢ on each \$100 of real estate transfers. Due to lobbying efforts of the Realtors Association, the grantors tax was withdrawn during the last week of the General Assembly Session. At this point a reenactment clause was added which, after one year, would require the legislation to be acted on again. The bill then failed in the Senate.

Mr. Crum said in November, members of the Commission had committed to take up discussion again on regional transportation issues and funding. The Transportation Funding Strategies Work Group would be reconvened following adjournment of the General Assembly, after the outcome of any pending legislation was known. Staff will contact members of the Work Group in April to see if they are still interested in serving on the Work Group. Based on discussions during subsequent Commission meetings, it was determined that the Work Group should look at broader options for transportation and funding.

Mr. Kaechele asked about the status of authorities in Northern Virginia and Hampton Roads. Mr. Crum said these are in place but he is going to research this further to see what is being done to develop funding sources. Mr. Crum said the courts had indicated the Commonwealth would need to collect money on behalf of the authorities and then return it to the localities. Mr. Crum will report back on this issue.

Mr. Padgett asked if any action had been taken with regard to increased representation for the Region on the Commonwealth Transportation Board. Mr. Crum said this was included in the RRPDC Legislative Agenda, but no legislation was introduced on this issue. This will be an issue to bring up again next year. The jurisdictional committees have both recommended that discussions on legislative issues begin as they are identified. It is the goal of staff to revise the job description for the Communications Coordinator to include active lobbying on behalf of the Commission during General Assembly sessions.

Mr. Glover emphasized that increased representation for the Region on the Commonwealth Transportation Board should be brought up again next year.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Committee Reports

There were no other committee reports.

B. Announcements

There were no announcements.

C. For Your Information

Included in this section was:

- Letter from the Chairman of the MPO and Chairman of the RRPDC to Governor Kaine regarding cooperation in determining how federal stimulus monies should be distributed. A response from the Virginia Secretary of Transportation was distributed to each member today.

V. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, on motion duly made and seconded, Chairman Cotman adjourned the meeting at approximately 2:30 p.m.

Robert A. Crum, Jr.
Executive Director

Timothy W. Cotman, Sr.
Chairman