

Minutes

Take Charge in Accomack County Session III – “How Do We Get There?” March 4, 2003 – 5:30-8:30 p.m. Nandua High School, Onley, Virginia

Present: Iris Smith, Greg Manter, Cynthia Wallop, Margaret Nedab, Eric Banks, Ben Ludwig, Don Bolling, Dave Schwarz, Johnnie Goodman, Winston Crichlow, Jon Johnson, Pauline Milbourne and Carla Woods.

Jon Johnson, Extension Area Specialist, Community Technology Development, welcomed the group and asked participants to introduce themselves.

Jon shared with the group a Powerpoint presentation, which reviewed the strengths/weaknesses in Accomack County identified by participants at the last session and also their vision for Accomack County in 2020.

Greg Manter, Director of Economic Development, Economic Development Commission, gave a presentation highlighting issues being addressed locally by the EDC. He also shared information on projects of the local Planning District Commission and Regional Partnership, which consists of representatives of government, businesses and civic groups.

Information on grants available from the Beaumont Foundation and the application process was included in participants' packets and was briefly discussed.

Jon asked those in attendance to review and re-evaluate the top strengths/weaknesses identified by popular vote at the last session and asked the group if additions or changes were needed. No additions/changes were made. Jon reviewed with the group Goals for Accomack County in 2020 and asked participants to think about which of these goals might be realistic accomplishments.

Participants discussed the enhancement of vocational training for high school students and the lack of skilled labor. Pauline Milbourne indicated that the Accomack County Vocational Advisory Committee is a functioning group and input could be shared with this committee.

Suggestions for the website included a link to NASA contractors and the Virginia Employment Commission to inform citizens of when positions are available. Also suggested was posting the STAR Transit schedule and a link to zoning matters.

Regarding funding for natural spaces and areas, Ben Ludwig mentioned offshore drilling funds, which allocate money for this purpose. If the funds are not used, they revert to general revenues. Contact your Congressman if interested. He also suggested

capitalizing on the area's unique and natural culture such as has been done at Martha's Vineyard where conservation measures have been put in place. Another idea is to look at current county zoning to see what it currently looks like and then address zoning problems if necessary.

Eric Banks suggested the Mayor of Wachapreague and Town Council might form a committee to address access to barrier islands. Don Bolling mentioned the possibility of a ferry system. Other agencies that might address this issue include Parks and Recreation and the Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District.

Jon Johnson offered the idea of promoting the area's agricultural environment as a tourism attraction.

Jon shared with the group the Project Committee Sheet and asked if perhaps a group would like to form to address any of the Goals for 2020.

Committee goals were identified as follows: (1) community website up and running, (2) computers and internet access in every home on the Eastern Shore, (3) electronic commerce, and (4) provide assistance to those who want to form their own business.

Jon encouraged participants to join the Technology Leadership Team. The next TLT meeting is scheduled for March 12, 5:30 p.m. at Nandua. He also asked the group to assist in educating the public and sharing what is needed with local government, School Board and other groups.