CITY OF WILLIAMSBURG

MEMORANDUM

TO: **Mayor and City Council**

DATE: **September 21, 2006**

SUBJECT: **Input from Town Hall Meeting and Online Forum**

Attached are the compiled comments from the September 14, 2006 "Town Hall" Meeting and the comments submitted on the Online Forum via the City's website as of September 21, 2006. The City will continue to collect Online Forum comments until Friday, September 29. These comments are provided as information for discussion at Council's retreat on Saturday.

Jodi M. Miller

Jodi M. Miller
Assistant City Manager

Town Hall Goals Priority Voting Results
September 14, 2006

		Total	Ranking
Goal 1: Character of the City		23	3
Goal 2: Economic Vitality		7	8
Goal 3: Neighborhoods and Housing		81	1
Goal 4 : Transportation		45	2
Goal 5: Public Safety		21	5
Goal 6: Education and Human Services		15	6
Goal 7: Recreation and Culture		23	4
Goal 8: Environmental Services		13	7
	Total	**228**	

Town Hall Online Forum Voting Results
As of September 21, 2006

	Total	Ranking
Goal 1: Character of the City	10	1
Goal 2: Economic Vitality	8	3
Goal 3: Neighborhoods and Housing	7	5
Goal 4 : Transportation	10	2
Goal 5: Public Safety	5	6
Goal 6: Education and Human Services	2	8
Goal 7: Recreation and Culture	3	7
Goal 8: Environmental Services	8	4
Total	**53**	

Town Hall Meeting Results
September 14, 2006

- Business development compatible with our strengths – culture, arts, research
- Utilize senior workforce
- Expand DT retail hours, lighting, police presence (expand beyond Merchants Square)
- Continue $2 tax (WADMC)
- Redevelopment opportunities
- Link TNCC Hospitality degree with business needs
- Skills for front line hospital staff to move up
- Artists living with their business (home-based)
- Whole Foods
- Student-oriented retail
- Tioga/S. Inn redevelop
- Workforce housing
- Amtrak – promote and use
- Pedestrian crossing signals are a safety necessity (with cars STOPPED for walkers)
- Enforce speed limit on Jamestown Rd.
- Advanced First Aid or EMT-B for CERT
- Upkeep of cross walks
- Longhill Rd. – Radar
- Enforce parking so access to streets are not blocked during special events
- Lighting at Jamestown Rd./Burns Ln. crosswalk
- Scotland St./Radar
- Dillard St. – Radar
- Signs stating Stop for Pedestrians in crosswalk as you enter Richmond Rd. at the shopping center
- Trailers – Skipwith
- Conservation estimates on Waller Mill lands
- "Clean" vehicles in the city fleet
- Public education – stormwater runoff quality
- Water conservation measures – new construction, rehabs
- Drought resistant landscaping/native plants
- "Green" building
- Support King William Reservoir
- Keep wooded tracts! They provide our clean air, filter the water AND keep our distinctive character (and once they're gone, twigs won't make up the vistas) (Gov. Kaine declared saving 400,000 acres – how? Why not HERE!)
- Show greenbelts in crosshatch on plan maps
- More tree preservation

- Need more parks (ponds, fountains, benches)
- Enforcement to protect character
- Meetings in the evening so citizens can attend and provide feedback
- Concern with deed restrictions by government
- Concern with large homes (McMansions) tear down small residential home for large homes
- Architectural standards for the entire City
- Need for more personnel for enforcement
- Need personnel to inspect in the evenings (parking on the grass)
- Help (encourage) artist ownership/business services
- Delete 22 units per acre
- Participate in the JCC affordable housing study (VA Tech)
- VA Power – tree cutting operation needs to be monitored by the City
- Underground lines on Longhill Road
- Negotiate with VA Power to underground wires instead of cutting trees (topping trees in neighborhoods)
- Increase percentage of owner occupied homes
- Look at increasing the rental inspection program in other neighborhoods (Skipwith, etc)
- Need more affordable housing (service jobs)
- 3 person rule (rigorous enforcement of the rules)
- Enforcement of all the rules in residential neighborhoods
- Better knowledge of violations for owners, publicize rules in layman's terms
- Invest money in rehabbing neighborhoods (street lights, sidewalks, underground wiring, etc.)
- Skipwith & Longhill Woods want to be focus area (traffic, rentals, deterioration of properties), traffic study
- Citizens want to be notified when these goals are discussed at CC work sessions
- Support rail, promote
- More bike ways/paths
- Slow traffic – calming
- City should promote rail, glorify train station/rail
- Hold train to their schedule
- More walking & bike paths, more parks, trees & benches
- More greenspace
- Museum of the history of the City of Williamsburg
- Williamsburg Area Council for the Arts
- Keep the Century Gallery in the City
- Unified calendar of events to include: WM, CW, City, Art, Music, Busch, etc.
- Recreation facility for Merrimac Trail area
- Connection of sidewalks & bike paths

- Performing Arts Center
- Tax exemption program as opposed to (or in addition to deferral program) for retirees on fixed incomes!
- Affordable housing
- City through Workforce role/initiatives could facilitate better connections, between TNCC, local business, & workforce pool
- Continue to support and enhance CERT capabilities in the City
- Disseminate info on blood drives to the volunteer opportunities through NRT's and city website

Submitted Comments from Sept. 14 Town Hall Meeting

- My hope is that Williamsburg strengthens its position on the cultural center of Greater Williamsburg. To do this entails the further development of a performing arts center – a mini-Ferguson Center if you will – one with a strong program of theater, music and dance events. Secondly, my hope for the city is that it continues as a unique entertainment and retail center, one that increasingly serves local people as opposed to visitors. In other words, Williamsburg would be the "Georgetown" of the area. This will require an expansion of the Merchants Square area and its enhancement – better lighting, a greater police presence, etc.

- Majority of dots (priorities) for Skipwith Farms and Longhill Woods were expended on:

    1. Skipwith/Longhill Woods residents/citizens being designated to participate in working sessions on the focus area (for cut-thru traffic, #of rentals, enforcement of property maintenance and zoning codes)
    2. Construction trailers/vehicles parked on roads all day and night; boat trailers parked on street; vehicles and trailers parked on lawns
    3. Longhill radar
    4. Enforcement of property maintenance and zoning code

Online Forum Comments for City Goals and Initiatives
Comments as of Sept. 21, 2006

Goals Key

1. Character of the City
2. Economic Vitality
3. Neighborhoods and Housing
4. Transportation
5. Public Safety
6. Education and Human Services
7. Recreation and Culture
8. Environmental Services

- Pursue development of neighborhood connector bike/walk trails **(Voted for Goals 1, 4 & 8)**
  Joli Huelskamp, 310 Burns Lane, 259-1897

- No additional input **(Voted for Goals 2, 3, 4 & 8)**
  Kathryn Blue, 511 Mill Neck Road

- If I had wanted to live in Newport News, I would have moved there 25 years ago. Instead, I chose to live here, in a small city with a unique character. I am disappointed in whatever "vision" has spawned the downing of 75 year old trees, in order to erect Walgreen's and the misery now lining Richmond Road. Every other municipality in Hampton Roads is trying to create what we already had – small town flair. Bah humbug to New Town – we had Old Town, and we are letting it slip into nothing… **(Voted for Goals 1, 3, 4 & 7)**
  Ruth Kaiser, rakaiser@sentara.com

- INCLUSION: The city needs to do a better job engaging ALL its citizens and stakeholders in discussions, not just those who love to voice their opinions. One way toward achieving inclusion would be to schedule meetings at various times, so that everyone might have the opportunity to participate. Every other month, have an evening meeting. DEVELOPMENT: If businesses and professionals are fleeing to "mixed use" developments, by turning these empty buildings into housing (or just the top or bottom floors), you'd be creating a new mixed use area. For instance, the Professional Drive (off John Tyler) businesses are moving to the newly opened retail centers. They are built to look like little houses. With a little creativity, we could keep these spaces filled and these communities vibrant. BY REINVENTING OURSELVES, WE CAN REMAIN VIBRANT AND REDUCE SPRAWL. Please stop the sprawl… And I must say, times shares? Really…can we come up with something that serves the people who live here? TRANSPORT: The increased service hours during the summer is confusing to me (BUT HELPFUL), since the fall is the time of year when Williamsburg is really hopping – students and tourists. It would also be great if our transport system could include some special event services. For instance,

Reminds me of the 15 year disgrace in New York City with the East River Drive. Perhaps the City of Williamsburg is not responsible for these works on the Richmond Road but it is certainly responsible to put some fire under those who are (presumably the State). The project should never have been allowed to start without a much shorter completion date. Recently the Public Works Department repaved our entire street (Woodmere Drive) in two days during the 102 degree heat. Shows what can be done. The Richmond Road business is a pothole to our town. **(Voted for Goals1 & 5)**
Robert A. Sewell, 133 Woodmere Drive, rsewell001@aol.com

- All of these are worthy goals (though I think "Williamsburg's unique character" is a thing of the past). Surely the overall goal should be to keep the city alive as a diverse, healthy, interesting place to live and work – a real town for real people. **(Voted for Goals 2, 3 & 4)**

- I am particularly interested in facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists so that possibly the use of cars could be decreased thus helping to decrease pollution. **(Voted for Goals 1, 4, 7 & 8)**
  Mary Turnbull, 229-4046

- No additional input. **(Voted for Goals 1, 2, 3, & 8)**
  Kris Fischer, 308 Burns Lane

- No additional input. **(Voted for Goals 1, 2, 5, 6, 7 & 8)**

Comment for September 14, 2006, Town Meeting

Save Our Green Space!

I am writing to protest the Williamsburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority's plan to build a two-story office building and parking lot in "Crispus Attucks Park" on Armistead Avenue. Because this proposal seems so short-sighted and so environmentally and economically unsound, I hope City Council will vote against including it in the new comprehensive plan.

As a resident of Harriet Tubman Drive, I would of course hate to see this bit of open space disappear from my neighborhood, but I believe there are several other reasons to reject this project.

- It makes little sense to erect a third city government building in this area when the Council is already planning a new city hall. Why not simply include the Housing Authority and Social Services in the new or expanded Stryker Building? The more compact and convenient the governmental center of the city, the better.

- A two- or three-story Stryker Building would be aesthetically compatible with the two new commercial buildings on Boundary Street, whereas a two-story office building on Armistead would be an inappropriate intrusion into a low-key and generally low-rise residential area.

- We surely do not need the environmental damage yet another parking lot would cause, especially at a time when the city should be encouraging citizens to walk, bike, or use public transportation rather than drive. And if all the offices in question remained at the site of the Stryker building, wouldn't there be adequate parking at the under-utilized parking deck across from the Post Office?

- If, indeed, there are long-range plans for a modest expansion of the existing Blayton Building, that project should have priority. With an aging population, the city needs additional affordable housing for the elderly more than it needs a shiny new government office building.

I find it ironic (and sad) that the WRHA, which has done so much over the past thirty years to revitalize the Harriet Tubman-Triangle-Scotland Street-Braxton Court area, now threatens to undermine its own good work with this misguided proposal.

Ideally, the new comprehensive plan will continue to designate "Crispus Attucks Park" as just that–a park. Certainly the city needs to preserve every bit of public green

space it can, especially if it intends to encourage increased population density. (Denser development, as I understand it, couples smaller private lots with more extensive common spaces.) In time, the city might want to provide additional landscaping and add benches or other facilities to make this green area into a real pocket park, a place that not only the immediate neighbors but also library patrons and visitors to other city buildings could enjoy.

Cam Walker

Cam Walker
416 Harriet Tubman Drive
Williamsburg, Virginia 23185
(757) 229-7851

September 7, 2006