

**WILLIAMSBURG CITY COUNCIL  
WORK SESSION  
MARCH 8, 2010**

The Williamsburg City Council held a work session on Monday, March 8, 2010, at 4:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers of the Stryker Building, 412 N. Boundary Street, Williamsburg, Virginia.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Jeanne Zeidler called the meeting to order.

**ATTENDANCE**

Present in addition to Ms. Zeidler were Vice-Mayor Clyde Haulman, Council members Ms. Judith Knudson and Messrs. Paul Freiling and Robert Braxton. Also present were City Manager Jack Tuttle, Deputy City Attorney Christina Shelton and Council Clerk Donna Scott.

Staff Attending: Economic Development Director Michele DeWitt, Communications Specialist Kate Hoving, Planning Director Reed Nester and Finance Director Phil Serra.

**ITEMS FOR CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF MARCH 11, 2010**

**Public Comment**

Mayor Zeidler invited public comment on items on the agenda for Thursday's Council meeting. There were no comments.

**Council Preview**

Mayor Zeidler confirmed that Council members have all the information they need regarding items on the agenda for the regular Council meeting on Thursday.

**BACKGROUND PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSIONS**

**Vision Hampton Roads**

Dana Dickens, President and CEO, Hampton Roads Partnership, thanked Mayor Zeidler for her work on the Partnership and noted she has been an important member of the group and her guidance and counsel will be missed when she retires from the Williamsburg City Council in June.

Mr. Dickens also thanked Councilman Freiling for his support on the high-speed rail issue. He added that there are currently interesting discussions between CSX and the Director of Rail and Transit, Thelma Drake, regarding the need for improvement in on-time rail travel. There is a contract that is going to be let concerning the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) which requires the involvement of environmental studies in the planning process for the widening of Interstate 64. The original plan had been to take it from Bland Boulevard to Rt. 199, but the study is now going to take it all the way to Richmond.

The Partnership has been working for some time on a Hampton Roads comprehensive economical development strategy for the entire region. In their discussion they have recognized three pillars in the Hampton Roads economy:

- Federal spending and military spending is the biggest one and represents about 45% of the economy of Hampton Roads. Because of this there will be a big impact on our economy if there is a reduction in federal spending. A 10% reduction would generate a billion dollar reduction to our economy.
- The Port has a far-reaching impact not only on Hampton Roads, but throughout the entire Commonwealth and generates a little less than 10% of the entire work force of the economy of Virginia that revolves around the port.
- Tourism. Important work has been done in this area by representatives from the City of Williamsburg, the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation and Busch Gardens.

Mr. Dickens said the three pillars represent about 75% of the economy in Hampton Roads. They have determined that because of the risk factor in the above-noted pillars, a fourth category will be created, and this will be the opportunity to diversify our economy in Hampton Roads. They are looking at growth industries with potential in Hampton Roads such as the technology industry, alternative energy sources like bio-diesel from algae, off-shore wind and the growing area of health care. Under the four general topics of discussion are about 65 action items. The objective is to look at the entire region and to align the multiple groups in Hampton Roads that are parts of the organizations. For example, there are a lot of different organizations working on tourism in Hampton Roads, and if they were to align the organizations and work on common goals and objectives, we would have a stronger voice.

We are competing with the rest of the world in this economy and we need to marshal every asset we can and align ourselves in the direction to best serve our economy. It's a great opportunity and challenge and he asked that when Council develops their strategic plans, that they look at the 138 page "Vision Hampton Roads" package with the end goal of creating better jobs, better opportunities and a better quality of life for our citizens.

Mayor Zeidler thanked Mr. Dickens for the overview and helpful background on "Vision Hampton Roads," and to the Partnership for leading this regional effort. She asked that Mr. Dickens give a little background on how this came about, some of the programs that are targeted and the potential for money to help.

Mr. Dickens said the Hampton Roads Partnership is made up of 17 counties and cities in the region with a mission to be more competitive and to become eligible to apply for economic development grants. Mr. Dickens noted the process of developing strategies involved 175-200 very qualified people and about 30 meetings; even more important is that there is now a road map to move forward and take full advantage of assets in Hampton Roads.

Council members thanked Mr. Dickens for his presentation. Mr. Haulman added that this macro vision of where this region can potentially go and the realization that we are all in the same boat is important. Mr. Dickens spoke about "Innovate Hampton Roads" which is a

program looking at the growth opportunities in technology, and about “Idea Works,” which is a program to take the technology that’s developed in the “Innovate Hampton Roads” clusters and transfer it to the private sector.

Mr. Freiling thanked Mr. Dickens and said he was particularly pleased to hear the comments about the potential for improved on-time performance of rail service on the Peninsula. He noted three areas that need to be improved to bring rail up to where it can serve this area effectively: on-time performance, speed of service and level of service that is offered. He asked about the recent discussion to redirect significant funds from the rail enhancement fund from the Washington, D.C. to Richmond corridor to the development of the 460 corridor, and Mr. Dickens said this refers to the recent budget amendment submitted. Several years ago there had been funds set aside in the rail enhancement fund for an undecided project. The amendment is to take the \$80 million to provide rail service to the southside of Hampton Roads. He said there are issues that need to be addressed in Richmond and Petersburg for on-time service for everything going south. These issues are top priority and the hope is that with the next stimulus money of \$3.5 billion they will be addressed for that opportunity. Mr. Freiling asked whether this may put in danger of division the previously strong consensus throughout the state of the importance of making the improvements first between the D.C. to Richmond corridor. Mr. Dickens said that part of it is that we have an extremely willing partner with Norfolk Southern to do something along their 460 line. He suggested that there is equally as much effort being put into trying to get those fixed as there is in providing the rail on the southside. He added that the Director of Rail and Public Transit, Thelma Drake, is keenly aware and actively engaged in trying to fix the issues. Mr. Freiling again thanked Mr. Dickens for the efforts to improve the on-time performance on the Peninsula because it is sorely needed.

In response to Mayor Zeidler’s questions, Mr. Dickens noted that once the board approves the product, it will be filed by the end of March. From that filing, there is about a 60-day period before they receive the economic designation they need and then they can file for grants. The process to apply for the grants is through the locality and Mr. Tuttle is aware of this process and that it needs to be part of the economic strategy.

### **Nichols Report Implementation**

Richard Schreiber, President and CEO, Williamsburg Area Chamber and Tourism Alliance, presented “Strategic Vision and Action Plan for the Historic Triangle Tourism Industry,” the Nichols Report, a review of progress.

The Strategic Plan Advisory Team was comprised of representatives of the City of Williamsburg, James City County, York County, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Busch Gardens, Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation, Prime Outlets, National Park Service, Timeshare community, Williamsburg Hotel/Motel Association, Greater Williamsburg Chamber & Tourism Alliance, Individual hotels and restaurants and 96 individuals who participated in a Public Review Session. The 72 page report identified numerous strategies with recommendations for implementation timing and organizational responsibilities, and provides a long-term vision with plans identified as short-term, medium-term and long-term.

The categories of interest were identified as:

- Products -- what attractions and amenities does the Historic Triangle have to offer potential visitors that provide the region with a competitive advantage?
- Customers -- who are the Historic Triangle's current customers and who are the customers that could be most critical to the tourism industry's long-term financial success?
- Competition -- who is the Historic Triangle's competition, how do they vary by customer segment and what competitive strides are they making?
- Delivery Systems – how do people get to the Historic Triangle and how are services delivered to them once they are here?

Mr. Schreiber said the Nichols Report includes many valuable ideas, the most valuable of which have been implemented. Some of the suggestions have not been pursued based on local knowledge about this market, which is greater than a consultant can have. He said that with the guidance of a new Leisure Travel Committee, ideas that make the most sense for the Historic Triangle will continue to be identified and implemented.

Mayor Zeidler thanked Mr. Schreiber for the presentation and for the follow-through on many of the Nichols Report ideas. Mr. Haulman thanked Mr. Schreiber adding that it is good to see the long perspective, and that he looks forward to updates in the future. Ms. Knudson noted the relatively new New Kent Welcome Center and asked about a new welcome center in York County. Although Mr. Schreiber wasn't familiar with details of the York County Welcome Center, he did say there is to be a press conference tomorrow to announce it.

Mr. Braxton congratulated Mr. Schreiber on the tourism event at the Kimball Theatre and for the accomplishment of many of the points from the Nichols Report. In response to his question about time shares and how to measure what has been done, Mr. Schreiber responded that time share representatives are not shy about advertising their occupancy rates; in fact according to an article in the Virginia Gazette, a 75% occupancy rate was reported. Tracking surveys report about 50% of our visitors stay in time shares and 25% stay with family or friends. He said there are many terrific reasons for tourists to come to the Williamsburg area and we need to give them reasons to spend more of their time in the City in order to absorb what our community has to offer.

Mayor Zeidler and Council members thanked Mr. Schreiber for the very informative presentation and will look forward to future status reports.

**CITY COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS** -- None

**SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS: MARCH 2010**

Mayor Zeidler noted the City Calendar for the month of March which Council members received in their meeting packets. Mr. Haulman pointed out the Seasonal Farmers Market scheduled for Saturday at 8:30 a.m.

### **OPEN FORUM**

Mayor Zeidler opened the Open Forum portion of the meeting inviting comments on any topic.

There being no comment the Open Forum was closed.

### **CLOSED SESSION**

At 5:20 p.m. Mr. Haulman moved that City Council go into Closed Session pursuant to Section 2.2-3711 of the Code of Virginia for the purpose of discussing two personnel matters per subparagraph 1, concerning appointments. The motion was seconded by Mr. Freiling and carried by roll call vote of 5-0.

Recorded Vote on the Motion:

Aye: Braxton, Haulman, Zeidler, Knudson, Freiling

No: None

The Mayor called for a five-minute recess prior to going into Closed Session.

### **OPEN SESSION**

Council again met in Open Session for certification of the closed meeting.

### **CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED MEETING**

Date: March 8, 2010

Mr. Haulman moved to approve the certification of a closed session pursuant to Section 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia. The motion carried by roll call vote of 5-0.

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Williamsburg has convened a closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of The Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

WHEREAS, Section 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by the Committee that such meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia Law.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of Williamsburg hereby certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification resolution applies, and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed session were heard, discussed or considered by the City of Williamsburg.

Recorded Vote on the Motion:

Aye: Braxton, Haulman, Zeidler, Knudson, Freiling

No: None

Absent During Vote: None

Absent During Meeting: None

City Council Minutes  
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The City Council meeting of March 8, 2010 was adjourned by unanimous roll call vote at 5:35 p.m.

Approved: April 8, 2010

Jeanne Zeidler  
Mayor

Donna F. Scott  
City Council Clerk