

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF CAROLINE COUNTY

109 Market Street, Room 106, Denton, Maryland

MINUTES

September 11, 2018

Present: President Larry C. Porter, Wilbur Levensgood, Jr., Vice President; Daniel J. Franklin; Commissioner; Chief of Staff Sara Visintainer; and County Attorney, Heather Price

Following the pledge of Allegiance, President Porter called for **Public Comment** and the following members of the audience came to the podium: Joe Anderson, Town of Ridgley, stated that the annual Ridgley Car Show would be held October 13, 2018. He stated that there are many events leading up to the Car Show and he hopes the Commissioners, as well as Caroline County residents, join in on the annual fun.

Proclamation Caroline Goes Purple: Jennifer Farina, Administrative Coordinator, Caroline County Commissioners Office, stated that September is National Recovery Month and all of the regional counties have devoted the month to “Going Purple” to bring awareness to the opioid crisis that is devastating both the youth and adults on the Eastern Shore. Ms. Farina stated that Caroline County has partnered with the Caroline County Human Services Council, as well as Drug- Free Caroline, to start an educational awareness campaign to get people in Caroline County to have the new conversation with their families on drug abuse. She stated that during the month of September both County agencies and local municipalities are lighting up purple to spread awareness. Ms. Farina also stated that “Purple” games will be held at each high school throughout the month as well as the implementation of Purple Clubs in both the middle and high schools that will run year long. Ms. Farina stated that the community volunteers and local agencies have given positive feedback and embraced the purple movement to help bring awareness and fight the negative stigma that is associated with drug abuse. She stated that together as a community Caroline County can continue to educate their citizens on the impact these decisions have on them and their family. On motion by Commissioner Franklin, seconded by Commissioner Levensgood, the County Commissioners unanimously declared September as “Caroline Goes Purple Month,” and thanked Ms. Farina for her leadership on the project.

Public Hearings: Legislative Bill #2018-1, Chapter 166 – Taxation – Development Excise Tax – Elimination: Sara Visintainer, Chief of Staff, Stated that Legislative Bill #2018-1, is an act concerning development excise taxes; for the purpose of eliminating the Development Excise Taxes for School Construction and Agricultural Land Preservation; by repealing Article V and Article VI of Chapter 166 of the Code of Public Local Laws of Caroline County, Maryland. Ms. Visintainer stated that this Bill eliminates the development excise taxes from the Caroline County code, which will allow the Commissioners to implement an impact fee if they so desire.

President Porter stated that one county resident signed up to testify and he asked them to approach the podium:

Bob Chapel, County Resident, stated that he believes it would be beneficial to the County if the Commissioners moved forward with adopting Bill #2018-1.

There being no more public comments the public hearing was closed.

Public Hearing: Legislative Bill #2018-2, Chapter 167 – Development Impact Fee — Creation: Ms. Visintainer stated that this is an act concerning development impact fees; for the purpose of funding capital costs of additional or expanded public works, improvements, and facilities required to accommodate new construction or development; by adding a new Chapter 167 to the Code of Public

Local Laws of Caroline County, Maryland. Ms. Visintainer stated that the purpose of the bill was to implement an impact fee structure in the county, which would allow for all residences that create an impact on public infrastructure to offset the costs. Under the current development excise taxes, the County is unable to collect from multi-family dwellings, since no new lots are created. The impact fee would treat all dwelling units equivalently and fairly. Ms. Visintainer stated that this bill would be workshopped at the next meeting to review potential amendments to sections relating to the farm lot exception, how the collection of previously levied excise taxes are handled, and refunds.

President Porter called for those who signed up to come forward and testify:

Bob Chapel, County Resident, stated that he believes it would be in the best interest of the Commissioners if they did not implement an impact fee for residential construction in Caroline County. He stated that the idea of an impact fee is great to cover the cost for public school construction, however he stated that the burden would fall heavily on first time homeowners or elderly who have already struggled with other mandated fees to build in the County. He stated that he does not feel the amount collected would be worth the burden it would have on the individuals trying to start a family and live in the County. He stated that he is against passing this bill and he strongly feels that there will be unintended consequences if it is passed.

Sue Simmons, Director of Recreation and Parks, County Resident, stated that she looked into how Queen Anne's County collected their impact fees, and she stated that they have a fee that is based on the square footage of the homes. She stated that if the Commissioners had not looked into that possibility, maybe they could workshop that idea.

There being no more public comments the public hearing was closed.

Update on Sheriff's Office Staffing: Capt. James Henning, Chief Deputy, Caroline County Sheriff's Office, stated that the Sheriff and Board of Education have been working with the Town of Preston to explore the possibility for jointly funding a school resource officer at Preston Elementary School. He stated that the Town voted on Monday night, and were able to come up with about \$10,000 to contribute to the costs. The Office of Human Resources is working with Capt. Henning to finalize numbers, but the total costs for this year will be in the neighborhood of \$70,000, which includes \$10,000 for equipment, fuel, and vehicle maintenance. Ms. Visintainer stated that she is working with them to figure out what kind of benefits package is appropriate to offer for a 10-month, contractual employee in the School Resource Officer (SRO). Capt. Henning stated that the goal is to have the position staffed by October 2018. The Commissioners stated that staff would be working on a budget amendment to add the new SRO position to the Sheriff's Office.

Update on Preparations for Hurricane Florence: Bryan Ebling, Director, Department of Emergency Services, stated that Hurricane Florence is currently expected to hit Caroline County at some time Saturday morning, however the timing could change depending on the speed Florence loses once it hits land in the Carolinas. Mr. Ebling stated that as of now Caroline County is looking to receive four to six inches of rainfall that will fall into the weekend. He stated that the rain, and potential for tropical storm winds, could be dangerous due to the already saturated soil in the county. The Department of Emergency Services has continued to conduct conference calls with internal and outside agencies, as well as the local municipalities and the volunteer fire service, to ensure everyone is on the same page with information. He informed the Commissioners that the Department of Public Works has checked on County buildings to ensure windows are properly closed and all generators are working. He stated that the Emergency Operating Center (EOC) would be staged Thursday, however it would not be in full operation until later in the week depending on the track Florence takes.

Mr. Ebling explained that the Governor declared a State of Emergency for the State of Maryland, and he explained that a local declaration had been prepared for the Commissioners consideration. A local state of emergency allows the county to seek State resources if necessary, as well as make emergency purchases. On motion by Commissioner Levengood, seconded by Commissioner Franklin, the Commissioners unanimously approved Resolution #2018-027, Declaration of Local State of Emergency and Executive Order – Hurricane Florence.

Consent Agenda: The following items were approved by unanimous consent.

- Community Partnership Agreement Between the State of Maryland and Caroline County for the Human Services Council
- Memorandum of Agreement with the Caroline County Human Services Council & Caroline Recreation and Parks for Afterschool Programs
- Governor’s Office of Crime Control and Prevention Caroline Go Purple Grant Award & Acceptance Form

Acting County Administrator’s Report

- Ms. Visintainer stated that the Commissioner’s Office and Staff have been working hard to prepare for Hurricane Florence.
- She stated that the Department of Planning and Codes received an update regarding the unsafe structure that is located on River Landing Road. She explained that the property owner has been given a set number of days to have the structure demolished and if not finalized in that time frame the County would take action and the owner would be charged for the demolition.
- Ms. Visintainer also informed the Commissioners that staff from the Critical Area Commission has indicated they are willing to revisit some of the provisions of the new model ordinance in response to feedback provided by the County about specific concerns. The CAC staff will draft changes and circulate back to Planning Department staff. This is expected to take several weeks.

County Commissioners Open Discussion Period:

- The Commissioners stated that they attended the funeral for Queen Anne’s-Hillsboro’s Assistant Fire Chief, Daniel Lister over the weekend. They stated that Governor Hogan gave a respectful and heartwarming speech, and the outreach of the community was thoughtful and generous. Commissioner Franklin stated that he lost a friend and former Deputy Chief of the Ridgely Town Police, and Commissioner Porter stated that a member of Drug-Free Caroline and an employee of Mid-Shore Behavioral Health, Mary Beth Brennaman passed away as well. The Commissioners stated that all of these losses were tragic for the Caroline County community.
- The Commissioners stated that they all attended visited different schools for the first day of school and stated that was nice to see so many smiling faces ready for the new school year.
- Commissioners Porter thanked Jennifer Farina and Sara Visintainer for organizing Caroline Goes Purple and stated that opioid abuse and deaths in Caroline County have reach an all-time high, and he hopes the awareness campaign will shed some light on the epidemic that is devastating the community.

Public Comment: Joe Anderson, Ridgely Resident, stated that he wanted to publicly thank Brenda Walls and all of the community organizations and volunteers that help raise money and organize the Ridgely Car Show each year. He stated that the Town of Ridgely received great support from the YMCA and Ridgely Volunteer Fire Department this year.

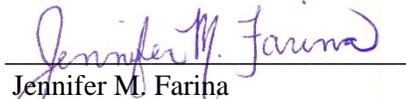
At 7:04 p.m. on motion by Commissioner Franklin, Seconded by Commissioner Levengood, the Commissioners unanimously adjourned open session and convened in **Closed Session** for the following:

Discussion of Legal Advice regarding a Recordation Tax Issue, Under the Authority: 2014 Md. Code, State, Government 3-305(b)(7).

At 7:13 p.m. on motion by Commissioner Franklin, seconded by Commissioner Levengood, the Commissioner's adjourned of closed session and reconvened in open session.

President's Report: President Porter stated that the Commissioners met to receive advice from the County Attorney regarding an indemnity deed of trust, and they provided direction to staff regarding how to proceed.

There being no further discussion the commissioners adjourned their meeting at 7:15 p.m.



Jennifer M. Farina
Administrative Coordinator