

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF CAROLINE COUNTY
109 Market Street, Room 106, Denton, Maryland

WORK SESSION
January 7, 2020

Present: President Larry C. Porter; Vice President Daniel J. Franklin (via phone); Commissioner Wilbur Levensgood, Jr.; Jeremy Goldman, County Administrator; Sara Visintainer, Chief of Staff; and Jennifer Farina, Administrative Coordinator

The meeting began at 9:00 AM.

Topic 1: Employee Introduction of Codes Enforcement Officer: Katheleen Freeman, Director of Planning and Codes, formally introduces Stacey Pindell who will be the new Codes Enforcement Officer for the County. Ms. Pindell was the former Town Manager for the Town of Preston and brings a great deal of experience in zoning, building codes, and construction trades. The Commissioners welcomed Ms. Pindell and stated that they looked forward to working with her in this new capacity.

Topic 2: Discussion of 2018 Building Codes Adoption and Suggested Amendments: Ms. Dadds stated that the Commissioners had previously discussed suggested amendments to the 2018 Building Code, and the Commissioners requested additional information and time to discuss a recommendation that agricultural pole buildings receive the same inspections as residential. Commissioner Levensgood stated that he had time to review the difference between agricultural, residential, and commercial buildings in the Code. The Commissioners asked if inspections would cause delays and Ms. Dadds stated the County's contracted would be held to the same standard they are for other inspections and that if you call before 9:00 a.m., you get a same day inspection. Commissioner Porter stated that he is not prepared to require inspections for pole buildings built by farmers to store agricultural equipment and supplies. Currently they have to get a permit, but they do not need an inspection unless there is electric or water.

Following further discussion, the Commissioners determined they would exempt only agricultural buildings built by the property owner, exclusively for agricultural equipment and storage. They also determined that buildings that qualified for this exemption and did not receive inspections should have something recorded in the land records, so that subsequent purchasers of a property would have a way to know that the building had not been inspected and therefore had restrictions on use. Staff stated they would work on drafting such an amendment. Ms. Visintainer stated that once drafted, the bill needs to be adopted by March 25, 2020, when the State requires the code to be adopted by the County.

Topic 3. Local U.S Census Committee Update: Ms. Freeman stated that Caroline County is participating in the 2020 Census. Every ten years the County must participate and this year the State has asked counties to have complete count committees to help count population of our jurisdiction that is difficult to count. For every person that we don't count, it is estimated the County loses about \$18,000 in federal funding over a ten-year period. Ms. Freeman stressed how important it is for the county to count as much of its population as possible to qualify for more federal and State funding. She stated that starting March 15, 2020, residents can fill out the Census online, but other more traditional methods will also be available. The Census Committee has divided into several committee in order to cover the main areas in the County that are hard to collect data from.

Topic 4: Open Discussion Period: Mr. Goldman stated that he needs direction from the Board regarding renewal of the IdentityForce protection plan for all county employees. He stated that the county purchased IdentityForce protection for a three-year period when there was an employee data breach. He went on to state that the Board need to give direction on whether or not they felt the need to renew the contract for an

additional period of time. The cost of the last contract was \$58,000 a year. Ms. Visintainer stated that many employees signed up for the first year of protection however several did not the last two years. She stated that she has been in contact with the company to track how many employees take advantage of the security coverage. The Commissioners stated that they would wait to hear back from the company on the usage by employees. They stated that for those still using the protection they would not want to fully eliminate services.

Mr. Goldman stated that there was illegal concrete crushing going on at a mining operation off of Bridgetown Road. He stated that a cease and desisted order was issued to the company due to the lack of permitting. He explained that the State had issued authorization to proceed, however the company had not gone through the proper local permitting process. Production has been stopped until the required zoning approval can be obtained from the Board of Zoning Appeals. The Commissioners concurred with this course of action.

Ms. Freeman provided an update on the potential loss of State funding for the grant-funded Circuit Rider Town Planner position, which is housed in the Planning and Coded Department and serves the five smallest towns. The Commissioners stated that they would put a placeholder in the budget for now to continue funding with county money, but that there are a great many budget priorities and it may not make the final budget. They asked staff to ask the small towns which is a greater priority, the continued services of this position or the annual planning grants provided by the County.

Ms. Visintainer briefly reviewed the process for considering and potentially granting a critical area growth allocation request with the Commissioners, so that they could be prepared for their meeting next week.

The Commissioners asked for some additional information on the legislation being pursued by Choptank Electric for member regulation to enable them to provide broadband services. The Commissioners are specifically interested in more clear communication on potential costs to homeowners for final connection from the street to their homes. Staff stated they would follow up with Choptank Electric and get the Commissioners more information.

There being no further discussion the meeting ended at 11:07 a.m.


Jennifer M. Farina
Administrative Coordinator