

CITIZENS FOR A BETTER EASTERN SHORE

SHORELINE

A Journal of Natural Resources, Public Affairs and Culture on the Eastern Shore of Virginia

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GREEN IS THE NEW GOLD

Ecotourism on the Shore

**CBES & Shorekeeper
Annual Meeting & Social**

**Tuesday, April 28, 7 PM
Little Italy, Nassawadox**

6 PM: Optional Dinner Hour
(Dinner reservations required)

**“PROTECTING and PRIMING
our ECONOMIC ENGINE”**

Keynote Speaker:

Bobbie Walker

Virginia Tourism Corporation

Tuesday, April 28

CBES/Shorekeeper

Annual Meeting & Social

Engage, Exchange Ideas, Enjoy!

By Donna Bozza

The world of social media is incredible, but it can't compete with sharing handshakes, smiles and a good meal. We have stoked up the “social” in our annual meeting to give you a chance to connect with both the CBES and Virginia Eastern Shorekeeper boards, their members and future members and local officials. The location, Little Italy in Nassawadox, provides an opportunity for you to join us prior to the meeting for fellowship and a buffet dinner at 6:00 PM. Or come at 7:00 PM for the meeting, which is free and open to the public.

With economic development foremost on the Accomack and Northampton County agendas, our keynote subject for this special evening is timely:

***GREEN IS THE NEW GOLD – Ecotourism on the Shore
Protecting & Priming our Economic Engine***

Rural economies have challenges; the Eastern Shore is no different. It makes sense to support and rev up our already successful economic engines like Ecotourism, which is a natural fit for the Shore with many benefits. Ecotourism also goes hand in hand with CBES nearly three-decade commitment to a sustainable future for the Shore.

With our engaging speaker, Bobbie Walker, Virginia Tourism Corporation's Tourism Development Specialist, we will explore the ways Ecotourism enriches a community, from its bottom line to its quality of life. Discover how we can help keep local governments attuned to the merits of this type of economic development – and how you and I can also help grow Shore tourism, regardless of whether we are in the business or not. Our speaker, who lives in Cape Charles, promotes tourism efforts on the Shore and throughout the region. She will offer a Q & A session following her presentation.

Bobbie Walker has spent twenty-two years with the Virginia Tourism Corporation, working closely with Virginia communities to provide hospitality education for workers and assistance in the development of tourism assets. Recently, she has been appointed Tourism Development Specialist for the Eastern Shore, Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula regions of Virginia. Her role is to facilitate local efforts at strategic planning and provide guidance as they develop new tourism initiatives including agri-tourism, aqua-tourism, space tourism, arts, history and heritage and other related activities.

Please join us on April 28 to hear the latest and greatest developments at CBES and the Virginia Eastern Shorekeeper. CBES will also be presenting its *Suzanne Wescoat Award* for “Exemplary service by an elected or appointed public official.” Plan to be there!

Tuesday, April 28:

Little Italy Restaurant, Nassawadox

Optional Dinner Hour, 6:00 PM, Festive Buffet, \$15, menu below

(Dinner Reservations Required: Call Little Italy 757-442-7831)

Annual Meeting & Presentation, 7:00 PM – Free & Open to Public

Buffet Menu: Baked Rotisserie Chicken, Fettuccine Alfredo, Eggplant Parmesan, string beans, salad, rolls and choice of soft drink, ice tea, tea, or coffee – \$15. Cash Bar available throughout the evening.



Balancing the Budget

A big challenge for Northampton County Supervisors – and taxpayers

Budgets work best when the dollars coming in are equal to, or even better, are a little bit more than the dollars going out. Spend only what you've planned to spend, except for real emergencies. Corporate finance people know this. Small business owners know this. Men and women running their household budgets know this. Even kids with weekly allowances know this. So, that should mean that our local governments ought to know this too – adopt the budget, know where every cent is going and stick to it except for real emergencies. There absolutely cannot be off-budget, additional, “discretionary” spending by county administration without scrutiny and approval of the governing body.

State and local governments are usually faced with more requests for funds than there is revenue coming in – and Northampton County is no exception. The preliminary budget showed Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 revenues at \$24.8 million and requests for funding for county operations and debt at \$27.6 million – a shortfall of \$2.8 million dollars. The county budget is separate from the school budget, which was proposed at \$20.3 million.

This equals the grand total of close to \$48 million to run a county of 12,125 people, a county with a shrinking population and a declining school enrollment. If all the new funding requests had been adopted, an alarmingly large tax increase would have followed.

Why the shortfall?

It wasn't only more funding increases that caused the shortfall. Decreased revenues are likely for both county and school budgets as state-level budget-balancing transfers more required expenditures from state to local governments. Locally, lower real estate property tax revenues may occur if property values decline. And sales and personal property tax revenues may also decline below projections as families juggle their own household budgets.

The logical way to balance a budget is to reduce expenses – and that's what Northampton County Supervisors found themselves doing within a very short time frame. In the absence of a Board-appointed Budget Committee to analyze and scrutinize all non-fixed expenses (including county and school operations and salaries), the Board has taken the budget proposed by the County Administrator and appears to have applied reductions only to requests for new funding – not to existing expense items.

Cuts to new spending requests – but not to the budget.

Among the cuts in new spending requests are:

- Vehicles for the Sheriff, EMS, Solid Waste and Commissioner of Revenue,
- Equipment for Electoral Board, EMS and Public Utilities, and
- New or expanded employment positions for Facilities Management, Treasurer, Commissioner of Revenue and EMS – including three new EMS positions.

It appeared almost effortless to reduce the shortfall by over half a million dollars by eliminating just two expensive items – a \$200,000 equipment replacement for the almost empty former Middle School and a \$350,000 water treatment system for the county government complex. In


short order, a revised budget draft retained requests for teacher salary increases; raised tipping fees at the landfill; and the Board considered imposing a full BPOL (Business and Professional Operating License) fee, raising the personal property tax rate and raising the real estate tax rate.

When the smoke cleared, the Board voted 3 to 2 to send the budget to public hearing. The proposal includes increases to other taxes and fees as well as an increase to the real estate tax of 5.35% or 3.6 cents per \$100 assessed valuation. Each penny of new real estate tax will generate about \$200,000 in new revenue.

A short time line for public input.

By the time *ShoreLine* readers receive this issue, the budget notice will be advertised and the required public hearing will already have been held. (It was scheduled for March 31.) The Board may decrease the tax rate after the hearing but cannot increase it. The Board will make a final decision on the tax rate and how the increased revenue will be spent and then adopt the FY16 county operating budget.

In December, 2014, the Board's *ad hoc* Tax Structure Committee recommended "...that a similar *ad hoc* Committee also assist the Board of Supervisors in examining expenses and spending at the County level..." But that recommendation has not yet been implemented.

At some point, local governments, like small business owners and household budgeters, will need to acknowledge that the economy has changed – that discretionary income is no longer readily available. Lower incoming revenue and tough decisions about what to spend it on have to be realistically aligned. Just adding expenses on top of last year's budget, then raising taxes without analyzing last year's expenses, isn't working for the taxpayers anymore. The Board needs to appoint that *ad hoc* budget advisory committee and decide if it wants to continue to tax and spend or whether it needs to start living within the means of its taxpayers. 

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“The Shore at a Crossroads”

Recalling John Price and his insight

By Denard Spady

The recent passing of John Price, a longtime *ShoreLine* edit board member and a CBES and Shorekeeper board member, recalled for many of us at CBES the ongoing effort to have the future of the Eastern Shore reflect the history and natural beauty of the Shore we have loved and which has attracted so many of us to live our lives here.

That effort has been going on for at least 50 years, ever since a clandestine effort to develop the three southernmost barrier islands and pipe sewage back to the mainland. It continued through the Brown & Root proposal for a massive “graving dock” facility near Cape Charles to build off-shore oil drilling platforms, the DiCanio proposal to build a PUD with hundreds of units and a commercial center, the Kirkwood effort to subdivide much of the the county in the shadows of many 25-lot “minor” subdivisions, the Brown & Root sale of its property to Foster Development (although fortunately the graving dock became Palmer and Nicolas golf courses, 3000 units can surround the courses and will put a strain on local resources), the gentrification of Cape Charles, and the failed efforts of a number of other smaller developers who saw “gold” in the Shore’s beauty and pristine nature. As Art Schwarzschild of the UVA LTER in Oyster has said, in order to manage growth, “*We* have to win every time – the developers only have to win once.”

In September 2004, John Price wrote an insightful article for *ShoreLine* in which he described the crossroads at which the Shore found itself. In 2015, we are approaching a similar crossroads again, and Price’s words can help us keep the objective in sight.


“Dreams of large scale development of the Shore’s natural beauty and recreational resources, whether on its seaside barrier islands or along its creek or bayside water frontages, have arisen from time to time. But they generally faded with little trace and left the fundamental character of the Shore largely undisturbed. More recently, however, as populations have increased and developable land became scarce in population centers south of the Bay, the attention of speculators and developers searching for attractive but cheap land turned to Virginia’s now-accessible Eastern Shore. ... The land rush was underway and the pace of change ramped sharply upward.

“Many residents, particularly those in lower income brackets, thought that their dreams of well-paying jobs were finally on the way towards realization. And, in addition, their real estate tax bills could begin to shrink – hadn’t political leaders in both counties promoted development as a way ‘to increase the tax base,’ and wasn’t large scale development doing exactly that? To the shock and disappointment of many, and, in spite of recent large increases in total assessments in Northampton, the county’s change in tax rates on its residents was an increase!

“This is precisely what some had foreseen and warned would be the inevitable result of too rapid development, political hopes and promises notwithstanding. Instead of the Eastern Shore’s evolving into a sort of Promised Land benefiting its predominately lower income population, those

presumed beneficiaries find themselves facing higher rather than lower taxes – as well as skyrocketing land prices which push the goal of home ownership ever farther out of reach for more and more longtime residents and their children.” ...

“...It is incumbent on the leadership of both Shore counties to take prompt action to protect the longer term interests of their populations, not only by stricter enforcement of existing regulations but also by instituting new legislation where needed.”

As consideration of the general revision of the Northampton zoning ordinance goes forward, our leaders would do well to remember Price’s words. 



In Northampton

When Flood Insurance required

Why no discount for Northampton homeowners?

By Roberta Kellam


With no explanation to the general public, the Northampton County Administration has decided not to participate in the Community Rating System (CRS), a voluntary incentive program provided by the FEMA National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) since 1990.

County-wide flood insurance premium rates could be reduced by as much as 45% if the county participated in the CRS program. The goals of the program are to:

- **Avoid or reduce flood damage to insurable property;**
- **Strengthen and support the National Flood Insurance Program;**
- **Foster comprehensive floodplain management.**

A **minimum** effort by the county could result in a 10% discount on flood insurance premiums for Northampton residents.

Accomack County, which has been a CRS community since 1992, and Chincoteague have both accomplished a community-wide 10% premium reduction by participating in the program. The towns of Cape Charles and Wachapreague have achieved a 5% premium reduction. Many areas of Virginia have accomplished a 15-20% rate reduction.

ShoreLine Comment. *Any homeowner with a mortgage is required by their lender to pay flood insurance premiums when their home is in a flood zone – and many such households are middle income taxpayers. Participating in the Community Rating System program would have a tangible benefit to those Northampton County residents. It is time that the county participates in the CRS program and seeks the maximum amount of insurance rate reduction possible through planning, zoning, open space protection and mapping for sea level rise.* 

Affordable Care Act on the Shore

Program is successful despite some problems

By Meghan Rolley Neville

Meghan Rolley Neville is an employee of the Eastern Shore Rural Health System, Inc. (ESRH), a non-profit organization dedicated to improving health care quality on the Delmarva Peninsula. She is an Outreach & Enrollment Coordinator for ESRH, often known as a health insurance “assister,” working at the Bayview Medical Center. At the request of ShoreLine, Neville evaluates how the Federal Affordable Care Act is working here on the Shore.

The Health Insurance Marketplace, a program created by the Affordable Care Act (ACA), has been open for over a year. The Health Insurance Marketplace (HIM) consists of the website, www.Healthcare.gov, and a call center run by Health and Human Services, where consumers apply for financial assistance and enroll in private health plans. During this time we have had the opportunity to see positive outcomes as well as the pitfalls of the law.

Locally, Eastern Shore Rural Health System, Inc. has five full-time employees, one at each Rural Health location, to assist residents with enrolling in health plans and to answer any questions regarding health coverage options. We have enrolled more than 900 people in Accomack and Northampton counties in health plans including Health Insurance Marketplace and Medicaid plans. Virginia as a whole enrolled over 384,000 people. This was higher than the highest possible numbers we thought we could achieve. We are very proud of our enrollment successes, but there is still much work to be done.

The second open enrollment season ended on February 15, 2015. However, a special enrollment period has been created for people subject to the tax penalty for not having health insurance when filing their 2014 taxes. From March 14 to April 30, you can enroll in health insurance coverage through the Health Insurance Marketplace. Those who enroll during this time will avoid a full tax penalty and may be eligible for an Advance Premium Tax Credit to lessen the burden of the cost of premiums. For 2015, the tax penalty is \$95 per adult or 1% of income, whichever is greater. For 2016, the penalty increases to \$325 or 2%, again whichever is greater. The penalty will continue to increase in subsequent years.

The Medicaid Gap.

Our two Eastern Shore counties still have many people who do not qualify for the Advance Premium Tax Credit subsidies that make the Health Insurance Marketplace affordable – but make too much to enroll in Medicaid. They fall into the “Medicaid Gap.” The Medicaid Gap was made possible by the first Supreme Court ACA decision (another decision to come this spring). The law was written so that families earning up to 133% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) (see Figure 1) would be covered by an expanded Medicaid program in their state. When the Supreme

Court made their first ACA decision, their ruling stated that state legislators could choose whether to accept the Federal dollars to expand their Medicaid program or not. Virginia is one of the 22 states currently rejecting Federal dollars for Medicaid expansion to cover people earning less than 133% of FPL. Because of this, the subsidies available cover incomes as low as 100% of the FPL (Fig 1), but if a family earns below that level they no longer qualify for the tax credits because the law was written with the intention of their being covered by Medicaid expansion.

While there are plenty of philosophical discussions to be had about Medicaid and funding sources, many of the most vulnerable among us still do not have much-needed health insurance. Here’s an example of how the “Medicaid gap” may cause problems here on the Shore:

Two clerks working in a local store each earn about \$15,000 per year, and they are not offered group health insurance benefits. One of the

clerks is a single woman with no dependents. This puts her earning between 100% and 133% of the Federal Poverty Level. She is, therefore, eligible for assistance with the Advance Premium Tax Credit subsidy as well as assistance with the deductible and other medical costs in the form of a Cost Sharing Reductions – another type of financial assistance provided through the Health Insurance Marketplace. In other words, she can purchase a private insurance plan for around \$20 a month with a \$200 deductible per year.

Meanwhile, her co-worker, who also earns \$15,000 a year, has two dependents. 100% of Federal Poverty Level for a household of 3 (single mother with two kids) is \$19,790. This puts her income below the poverty line. She is not eligible for the Advance Premium Tax Credit because as the law was written she was meant to be covered by Medicaid. Virginia does not have expanded Medicaid. Her only option in Virginia is to pay full price for a health plan. This makes her monthly premium – for the same plan her colleague is enrolled in – cost around \$300 a month. She also is not eligible for Cost Sharing Reductions, so her deductible would be \$3350 per year. There would be no penalty at tax time for this woman because the plan she can purchase

Figure 1 - Federal Poverty Level Percentages

Household Size	100%	133%	200%	250%	300%	400%
1	\$11,670	\$15,521	\$23,340	\$29,175	\$35,010	\$46,680
2	\$15,730	\$20,921	\$31,460	\$39,325	\$47,190	\$62,920
3	\$19,790	\$26,321	\$39,580	\$49,475	\$59,370	\$79,160
4	\$23,850	\$31,721	\$47,700	\$59,625	\$71,550	\$95,400
5	\$27,910	\$37,120	\$55,820	\$69,775	\$83,730	\$111,640
6	\$31,970	\$42,520	\$63,940	\$79,925	\$95,910	\$127,880
7	\$36,030	\$47,920	\$72,060	\$90,075	\$108,090	\$144,120
8	\$40,090	\$53,320	\$80,180	\$100,225	\$120,270	\$160,360

does not meet the definition of “affordable” for her – but it still leaves us with the same problem of not having universal access to affordable health insurance.

The Family Glitch.

Another problem affecting local families is what we refer to as the “Family Glitch.” This is not a problem that can be addressed by Virginia’s legislators but rather one which needs to be addressed by Congress.

The “Family Glitch” occurs when one spouse is offered coverage from work that meets all the guidelines set forth by the ACA. The health insurance offered by the employer could be very inexpensive for the *employee only*, but when the employee adds the remainder of her family it becomes cost prohibitive.

For many employees, family coverage under an employer can cost around \$1000 a month. The law states that if the coverage is “affordable” for the employee (meaning it costs less than 9.5% of the employee’s income for the *employee-only* health plan), then the remainder of the family is not eligible for the Advance Premium Tax Credit for Marketplace health insurance – again, no subsidy. This means the family can take the \$1000 a month employer plan or pay full price for a family health insurance plan. If this family earns less than 200% of FPL (see Figure 1), they may be able to enroll their children on Medicaid or FAMIS (Virginia’s health insurance program for children), but if they earn more than that there is no additional assistance available. It doesn’t matter whether this family is living on \$15,000, \$35,000 or \$450,000, the price of insurance is the price. While there is no longer medical underwriting to get insurance (which is a very big deal to many people), there are still large disparities in the cost and accessibility.

Successful Programs.

Despite these problems, we have been able to get many people insured. We continue to assist folks who are transitioning from one plan to another or who are getting health coverage for the first time in their lives. We also are able to assist parents with Medicaid and FAMIS applications for their children. The streamlining, uniformity, and “no wrong door” approach to accepting Medicaid applications has helped connect Virginians to coverage and help make understanding the qualifications more transparent.

Due to the lack of Medicaid Expansion, several programs that were terminated with anticipation of the ACA have been reinstated including FAMIS MOMS, covering pregnant women up to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level, and Plan First, offering birth control and other very limited benefits to the uninsured up to 200% of FPL. Recently, Governor McAuliffe created a new Governor’s Access Plan (GAP) to provide access to services for low income Virginia residents diagnosed with a mental illness. Even with these programs many Virginians remain completely uninsured or without comprehensive major medical coverage despite the fact that they are working. 72% of uninsured adults who could gain Medicaid coverage live in a family with at least one full-time or part-time worker and more than half are working full time themselves. (Source: Kaiser Family Foundation)


Future Enrollment.

Open Enrollment for 2016 coverage in Health Insurance Marketplace plans is slated for November 1, 2015 through January 31, 2016. Just as importantly, people need to know they

can be eligible for a Special Enrollment Period(s) throughout the year, if they have a qualifying life event such as marriage, divorce, death, birth of a child, a move to a new coverage area, a change in employment or a change in income. It is important to act quickly when one of these life changes occurs because the window to modify or enroll in a plan only stays open for 60 days.

This is not a one-size-fits-all program. Each circumstance needs to be analyzed so that you can determine the best options. Because of this, phone calls and face-to-face appointments are the best solution. If you, or anyone you know, has a question or simply wants more information, please do not hesitate to call an assister in your area – we are here for everyone. If you are accustomed to dealing with insurance agents, feel free to continue to work with them and know that you can still call us for information; we are here to help and complement their services. Rural Health assisters are available by email at getcovered@esrh.org or at the following locations:

Bayview Community Health Center 757-331-1086 ext. 204
Franktown Community Health Center 757-442-4819 ext. 362
Onley Community Health Center 757-787-7374 ext. 767
Atlantic Community Health Center 757-824-5676 ext. 637
Chincoteague Community Health Center 757-336-3682 ext. 424

Author’s Note. If you have an event and would like to have an in-depth presentation on the Health Insurance Marketplace please feel free to contact Meghan. She can be reached at Bayview Community Health Center and other assisters are available at each Rural Health medical office. 

A Clarification

Northampton debt situation

The March issue of *ShoreLine* included an article about Northampton County debt entitled “When County Debt Outpaces Local Pocketbooks.” Northampton Board Chair, Rick Hubbard, apparently liked the general thrust of the article and read two paragraphs into the meeting record. However, he felt that the closing sentence was misleading and compared Northampton’s debt to that of several cities and urban counties.

He was right. We agree that in the comparing the “type of debt load carried by Chesterfield County and the cities of Richmond and Chesapeake” with the Northampton County debt, it was unclear that what was actually being compared was the annual debt service *per capita* – *not* the total debt in dollars. We apologize for the misunderstanding.

We reiterate that the annual debt service per person is already nearly the same for Northampton taxpayers as it is for residents of the much larger localities – and that does *not* include any new debt for school construction. Chesterfield County’s debt service is \$201 per person, per year; the City of Chesapeake’s is \$241, Northampton County’s is \$250 and the City of Richmond’s is \$258. Increasing county debt with new borrowing would make the comparison even more glaring.

(Population and Annual Debt Service figures from the VA Auditor of Public Accounts.)

Keeping Track

Reversal of Roles: PUD out – PUD in. In Accomack County, once considered the *laissez faire* county, Supervisors recently voted to eliminate the county's Planned Unit Development (PUD) Ordinance after hearing it described by the Planning Commission as unwieldy and hard to interpret. The online document is complicated, full of necessary legal requirements and complex conditions. The PUD Ord would have controlled development of 50 or more units and is now considered to encourage projects "inappropriately sized for the county." Developers of the large and controversial Town Center at Wallops Island Spaceport had been the only applicant since 2008.

On the other hand, Northampton County, once considered the more progressive county in its land use management, includes a new PUD District in what is now being advertised as the "revised" zoning ordinance. No actual PUD Ordinance appears in the document, but the explanation in §154.1-219 appears to say that each PUD District application will make up its own rules – including density, lot size and setbacks. In addition, the proposal seems to allow for single-use commercial and industrial as well as residential "PUD" districts anywhere in the county.

Section 15.2-2201 of the Virginia Code defines a PUD: "*Planned unit development' means a form of development characterized by unified site design for a variety of housing types and densities, clustering of buildings, common open space, and a mix of building types and land uses in which project planning and density calculation are performed for the entire development rather than on an individual lot basis.*"

Budget shuffles to Jail. The "regional" jail in Eastville is an expensive operation to run. Recently, during the Five-Year Strategic Plan discussion, a Northampton County Supervisor inquired about reducing what he termed a "deficit" in the Regional Jail operations – the deficit apparently due to operational expenses for the *entire* facility, in spite of a small inmate population. In response, the County Administrator stated that the Jail Fund has no deficit! "When expenditures [from the Jail Fund] exceed revenue, then the General Fund makes a greater contribution to the Regional Jail Fund."

For FY2016, the Northampton County "contribution" is budgeted to be \$1,616,459 – unless, of course, "expenditures exceed revenue."

Maintenance and repair – protecting capital investments. Much of the need for expensive repairs to Northampton County buildings and replacement of equipment has been said to be caused in part by delayed or inadequate maintenance and upkeep. These routine matters could appear in budgets as positive, proactive, and necessary expense items to protect capital investments and prolong their useful lives.

Both the Sheriff's Department and the school bus program have a timely vehicle replacement program in place. This helps ensure that vehicle replacement expenses aren't done only on an emergency basis. Many of the Northampton County departments have line items for "Repair and Maintenance" or "Maintenance Contracts." As expected, the departments with most wear and tear have the largest revenue allocations for maintenance: Facilities Management, \$129,383; Solid Waste, \$68,600; EMS and

Emergency Services combined, \$30,375; and the Sheriff's Department, \$21,750. The county's FY2016 budget includes a total of \$251,807 for maintenance and repair. That's a mere 0.009% of the annual county operating budget. A total of \$138,016 of additional requests for funding for Repairs/Replacement/Maintenance was eliminated from the initial proposed budget. Is this penny-wise and pound-foolish?

Reallocation of some funds, and creation of a timely cycle of repair and replacement, might be part of a Budget Committee's work, or an *ad hoc* Budget Committee's charge during the next budget cycle.

Public Information Meetings held for county-wide rezoning. Northampton County sponsored two public meetings "with regard to the proposed revised zoning ordinance." Meetings were announced as an "informal opportunity" for the public to learn about revisions to the proposed county-wide rezoning, ask questions of staff and view the rezoning maps of the county. Unfortunately, the meetings were relatively poorly attended. Long Term Planner Peter Stith gave a short summary of some of the proposed changes to the original zoning draft, but with no comparisons to the zoning ordinance currently in place. After a long, awkward silence, several attendees expressed disappointment at the lack of a public Question and Answer period at the Kiptopeke meeting.

The next night at Occohannock, attendees took the floor and asked questions of staff and supervisors Trala and Hubbard, the two Board members in attendance. A spirited interchange began, including questions about justification of changes, arbitrary mapping of properties and new Uses inserted into the ordinance. Of particular concern was a Use called "Waste-related" – the discussion appeared to indicate some confusion by at least one Supervisor of what the proposed definition could include, e.g., incinerators, waste storage, etc. Comment sheets were available for written input to the Board of Supervisors and staff was available to answer questions.

Planning Staff members manned tables around the room with printed handouts – but with no detailed presentation of the wide-ranging zoning changes, or new impacts on current property owners, there was little substantive information to question. Many attendees appeared well-versed in the proposed rezoning document, and often seemed knowledgeable about details, deletions, inconsistencies and consequences of the changes.

By 8:15 PM, most of the public had left, although the meetings had been scheduled from 7 until 10 PM. Scores of pages of written comments were submitted. A county memo states that on March 24, the "Team" would prepare the public input comments for the Board's review. A March 30 recessed Board meeting was scheduled to decide "if comments received at the Public Information meetings need to be included in the revised documents."

A Joint Public Hearing has been tentatively set for May 20, with an up-to-100-day review period by the Planning Commission, and possible Board action by September.



The Director's Corner

Reaching Forward

Those with their own business know it is exciting when your company must break new ground and move forward in dynamic ways. There are always some daunting moments but you push ahead because stagnation leads to decline and change is essential to a thriving business. At the cusp of our 28th year, CBES is facing one of those daunting moments. Our Board has renewed its commitment to the future of CBES by moving to a full time organization. While financing the change is hard, CBES must move ahead to thrive. It is a challenging time.

But despite the challenges, CBES is making progress. We are trying to balance the need to create financial stability with continuing to make progress on making CBES more effective in our community.

We started by improving and expanding our communication. Check out CBES brand new, user-friendly website – www.cbes.org. It is your resource for important Accomack and Northampton County meetings and opportunities for you to get involved in the democratic process. Also, you will find out about CBES events and forums and learn how you can join forces with us for a strong, unified voice that those in authority will hear.

New too are CBES “News You Need” email blasts. Our initial emails centered on Northampton County issues including the proposed rezoning, development of the Comprehensive Plan and concerns over a tax hike. Shortly we hope to broaden this communication Shore-wide as one of the ways CBES is expanding its community outreach.

Published since 1988, our *ShoreLine* news journal’s role in advocating for transparency in government has not diminished. I recently heard a testimony to its effectiveness as I walked into a public information meeting to a shout of “Thank God for CBES and *ShoreLine* or we wouldn’t know what the hell was going on...!” We have heard this in various forms over the years. Currently CBES is working to make the valuable research and

information in *ShoreLine* more accessible. The new website is a great start.

What else is in the works at CBES?

New grant applications are crucial. One promising early venue is Virginia Tourism, where monies may ramp up the marketing of our annual Between the Waters Bike Tour and cover some of the related costs. This is a win for the community as well, considering the tens of thousands of tourism dollars that the bike tour brings to local businesses during late October. The search for other grant opportunities will continue.

Another focus is how we can reduce the costs of our building in Eastville. We have renovated the interior of the space with an eye to renting the office space in our Eastville location. A big shout out to two generous Shore businesses – LeCato Interiors and Northampton Lumber Company, who provided materials – and to all the volunteers who pitched in to clean, move and paint. CBES and Yuk Yuk’s thank you. [For information on renting this affordable space, please email donna@cbes.org or call 757-678-7157.

We also have an exciting E-Waste Recycling Fundraiser scheduled May 14 through May 20. Help your CBES out and help keep these electronics items out of our landfill by holding onto your old computers [no monitors please], laptops, printers, scanners, fax machines, tablets, ipads, ipods, cell phones, smart-phones, Gaming Systems, VCRs, and DVRs. Details to follow!

These are exciting and challenging times for CBES. Yet we cannot reach forward without your continued support. Please take a moment to read the insert letter from CBES president Arthur Upshur.

The Eastern Shore needs CBES and CBES needs the Shore.

Godspeed,

Donna Bozza, Executive Director, Citizens for a Better Eastern Shore

Detach and return to CBES, PO Box 882, Eastville, VA 23347 • Join online at www.cbes.org

CBES Membership 2015

New

Renewal

For Office Use

I would like to receive *ShoreLine* by email: Yes No

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ email _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ - _____

My volunteer interests are: _____

Enclosed is \$ _____ for the following:

- * _____ Regular Membership (includes *ShoreLine*) \$ 25
- * _____ Life Membership (includes *ShoreLine*) \$ 500
- * _____ Optional additional tax-deductible contribution of \$ _____
- * _____ *ShoreLine* subscription without CBES membership \$ 25

For our membership records, please tell us how many there are in your home 16 years or older: _____

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SHORELINE

Community Calendar - April 2015

Note: Please verify times and places prior to attending meetings.

CBES and Other Activities		Accomack County		Northampton County	
Apr 1	VIMS Public Seminar 7:30 PM, Wachapreague	Apr 1	Board of Zoning Appeals 10 AM, Sup. Chambers	Apr 6	Board of Zoning Appeals 1 PM, Conference Room
Apr 9	Shorekeeper Meeting 3 PM, ES Chamber of Commerce, Melfa	Apr 8	Planning Commission 7 PM, BOS Chambers	Apr 7	Planning Commission 7 PM, Sup. Chambers
Apr 14	CBES Exec. Committee 5 PM, CBES Office	Apr 15	Board of Supervisors 6 PM, BOS Chambers	Apr 14	Board of Supervisors 7 PM, Sup. Chambers
Apr 21	ES Groundwater Committee 10 AM, Accomac	Apr 16	Wetlands Board 10 AM, Sup. Chambers	Apr 21	Public Service Authority 7 PM, Conference Room
Apr 21	CBES Board Meeting 7 PM, Eastville	Apr 21	School Board 7 PM, BOS Chambers	Apr 15	Wetlands Board TBA, Conference Room
Apr 23	UVA Seminar Series 7 PM, Oyster			Apr 28	School Board 5:30 PM, Sup. Chambers
				Apr 28	BOS Work Session 7 PM, Sup. Chambers

www.cbes.org