

Study Group Meeting (#4)
Big Woods EDA-owned assemblage North Side of Victory Blvd
830 Poquoson Avenue – January 31, 2017

Attendance

Donald Booth, EDA Chairman, Alan Meetze, EDA Vice Chairman, Tim Trant, Henry Freeman, Katie Patrick, EDA Directors, Gus Goddin, Planning Commission, Dave Callis, Director ED, Charity Gavaza, ED, Deborah Vest, Director Comm Dev., Dannon O'Connell, Planning

NOTES

Chairman Booth opened the meeting stating that the goal was to wrap up with an agreed upon document to present to City Council on February 27, 2017 at their regularly scheduled meeting. Based on the previous three meetings, Chairman Booth adjusted a draft of the group's response to and suggestions for the Guiding Principles and handed it out to the group to lead the discussion. He stated that the additional suggestions would be provided in an addendum for City Council's consideration

Previous meetings raised the topic of updating a Market Study for the six parcel (6) assemblage and Big Woods area. Chairman Booth introduced this for discussion as a possible recommendation to City Council and a commensurate resource request to fund it. The EDA Study Group voiced general support for this initiative.

A recent meeting with EDA representatives and the City Manager concerning EDA-owned property, including the assemblage, raised the question of a City Council suggested goal of developing "nautical retail." The group discussed what that might include. The potential of a West Marine or other stores catering to boating and fishing was mentioned. Themed retail was discussed; are there other themes that would work well in Poquoson? Director Patrick mentioned the unique retail development near Jefferson Commons combined with apartments, food and specialty retail.

The discussion returned to revenue generating recreational facilities like WISC (Williamsburg Indoor Soccer Club). Several people will be digging deeper to learn more about the success, profitability and details of this and similar projects. Cultural venues such as the Yoder Barn were also considered. Director Meetze suggested putting out an RFP for a private developer to look at these possibilities.

One use that was listed as possible development for the assemblage was clean manufacturing. Generally and for a number of reasons, the group opinion seemed to be that it was an unlikely use and very competitive with neighboring developments in other cities, although an R&D use would be desirable.

Consideration of a medical use last meeting developed into a discussion of various levels of aging support and the various medical formats that involved. Generally, it was agreed that the community may need these facilities, that it is believed they are profitable and offer decent paying employment. Director Patrick suggested that the Peninsula Agency on Aging (PAA) has access to very good data on these facilities, including distance of placing parents near family, acreage required for a project, etc. The question was raised on the size and type of development occurring adjacent to Poquoson in York County at the intersection of Victory and 134. Director Trant suggested obtaining a Fiscal Impact Analysis of such a project. Along the lines of desired medical uses, further discussion ensued about the possibility of an Urgent Care Facility.

Although Professional Office would be a desirable use for the Big Woods and the assemblage, there are currently several opportunities for lease/sale of existing buildings that have been vacant for some time. Also, the availability of quality product immediately outside Poquoson borders in all directions makes this use very competitive.

Director Patrick suggested educational uses (such as private universities), may be a good fit for Poquoson. Also testing centers are often similar uses to be considered.

To wrap up, Chairman Booth requested the group bring up any considerations they felt may be important and had not been discussed and vetted. The goal is to refine the Principles document and prepare for presentation to City Council. Based on responses, no further meetings should be required. Chairman Booth also suggested that a request for funds to purchase a market study be presented to City Council. In addition to market analysis, it should be considered that the study also provide a roster of both business types and specific businesses that might be attainable for the city.

Chairman Booth reminded everyone of the February 27, 2017 presentation to City Council and requested attendance from the study group in support of it.