

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR SOMERSET COUNTY
TUESDAY APRIL 5, 2016

At 1:00 p.m., the Board of County Commissioners for Somerset County opened in Regular Session. Present for the meeting were Commissioner President Randy Laird, Commissioner Craig N. Mathies Sr., Commissioner Jerry S. Boston and Commissioner Rex Simpkins. Commissioner Vice President Charles F. Fisher was not present at this time.

County Administrator-Clerk Ralph D. Taylor and Administrative Aide Lory E. Ebron were also present.

President Laird called the meeting to order, and asked Commissioner Mathies to lead those attending the meeting in repeating the Lord's Prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Meeting minutes were approved later in the meeting.

Mr. Gary Pusey was asked to come forward to present the Planning Commission's recommendation to the Board with regard to the Smith Island Vision Plan. Mr. Taylor stated that a public hearing is required to be held by our office to hear comments before action can be taken to add the amended Vision Plan into the county's comprehensive plan.

Mr. Pusey explained that beginning in the fall of 2014, and continuing through the summer of 2015, the Visioning Process was conducted by residents of Smith Island, representatives of various State, Federal and local agencies, and other interested persons to develop a plan for the future of Smith Island. Mr. Pusey explained the process as it has progressed, culminating with the Public Hearing that was held by the Planning Commission in February 2016. He stated that the purpose of the public hearing to be held by the Commissioner's Office is to add the Vision Plan to the County's Comprehensive Plan, which will then allow Smith Island to receive grant funding opportunities not currently available. This will allow Smith Island to receive funding for legitimate projects that they would like to do. Mr. Pusey closed his statements noting that there were only two minor wording change amendments made to the Vision Plan.

Commissioner Fisher arrived to the meeting at this time.

It was the consensus of the Board to move forward with the scheduling of a Public Hearing to present and endorse the Smith Island Vision Plan in becoming an amendment to the County's Comprehensive Plan as recommended by the Planning Commission. It is anticipated that the public hearing will be scheduled for mid-May, 2016.

Mr. Taylor continued the meeting with correspondence and discussion items at this time.

A letter was received from Somerset Utilities advising that as part of a Settlement Agreement between New Alchemy Energy Partners, LLC (NAEP) and Somerset Utilities LLC (SU), enforced on February 23, 2016, NAEP shall assume and acquire 100% of the properties, assets and rights of SU existing at the time of Settlement Execution. Therefore, SU has requested assignment of the non-exclusive Franchise Agreement between SU and the County to NAEP. Mr. Taylor advised the Board that Attorney Simpkins is reviewing the request, and will report an opinion back to the Board for their consideration.

Mr. Taylor requested the Boards approval of his letter sent to Ms. Mindy Lee, PE, FAA regarding the Airport Capital Improvement Plan (ACIP), Crisfield-Somerset Airport, which due to time constraints, was mailed on April 1, 2016. The letter was a follow up to the meeting held on February 1, 2016 between the FAA, MAA (via conference call), County, City of Crisfield and AECOM regarding the ACIP.

Upon a motion made by Commissioner Boston, and seconded by Commissioner Fisher, it carried 5-0 to approve the letter sent to Ms. Mindy Lee regarding the ACIP as presented.

A discussion was held with regard to the request received from Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland to meet with the Somerset County Planning Commission and/or Department to present the NAS PAX JLUS study for official adoption. Following the review by the Planning Commission, the next step in the process would be to get an official resolution from the County Commissioners stating the study's recommendations will be incorporated into the Somerset County Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Taylor made a recommendation to the Board to have Mr. Gary Pusey, Planning Director, review the document in its entirety, prior to a decision being made by the Board.

Therefore, following the discussion, upon a motion made by Commissioner Fisher, seconded by Commissioner Simpkins, it carried 5-0 to take no action at this time regarding the request presented by Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland.

Mr. Taylor presented a proclamation for the Boards approval proclaiming April 2016 to be Fair Housing Month in Somerset County.

Upon a motion made by Commissioner Fisher and seconded by Commissioner Boston, it carried 5-0 to approve the proclamation declaring April 2016 as Fair Housing Month in Somerset

County, encouraging all citizens of the County to support and endorse the practice and policy of fair housing for all citizens of our County.

Meeting minutes for the Commissioner's Meeting and Closed Session Meeting held on March 22, 2016 were presented for approval. Commissioner Boston noted a correction needed to the seconding of a motion made on page 3 of the Closed Session minutes. Therefore upon a motion made by Commissioner Boston, seconded by Commissioner Simpkins it carried 5-0 to approve the minutes with the correction as noted.

Mr. Taylor presented Resolution No. 1102 to completely revise Resolution No. 568, a Resolution which established the Tourism Commission and provided for the powers, terms, and authority for the membership of the Tourism Commission. Mr. Taylor noted that Ms. Widdowson had presented the drafted resolution for the Boards consideration a few weeks ago.

Upon a motion made by Commissioner Simpkins, seconded by Commissioner Fisher, it carried 5-0 to approve Resolution No. 1102 as presented.

The Board was advised of the need of a Closed Session. Therefore, at 1:18 p.m., upon a motion made by Commissioner Simpkins and seconded by Commissioner Boston, it carried unanimously to enter into Closed Session by Authority of State Government Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland Section 10-508 (a)(1)(i) the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom it has jurisdiction; and Section 10-508 (a)(3) Consider the acquisition of real property for a public purpose and matters directly related thereto.

Upon a motion made by Commissioner Mathies and seconded by Commissioner Boston, it carried unanimously to adjourn the Open and Closed Session Meetings at 2:53 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:



Lory E. Ebron
Administrative Aide

Approved by:



Board of County Commissioners
For Somerset County