

Goals of the Mathews County Board of Supervisors (no priority assigned) from February 24, 2010 Retreat.

(***Bold type** under “Actions” denotes changes/additions made on February 24, 2010.)

Healthy Waters and Economic Development

The Board of Supervisors recognizes that the county’s future depends greatly upon the health of the waters surrounding the County of Mathews. Clean waters will provide for economic benefit in numerous forms from tourism to fisheries.

Actions:

- *The Board of Supervisors will support local, state and federal efforts to improve water quality in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.*
- *The Board will encourage the development of aquaculture businesses through a review of various ordinances as well as other supportive mechanisms.*
- *The Board will encourage traditional fisheries through policies that allow for some use of county-owned piers and docks.*
- *The Board will direct staff to familiarize itself with the water-base use conflict study conducted in Gloucester County so that useful policies developed in that study might be transferred to Mathews County.*
- **County should consider broadening the Resource Management Area (RMA) as a means of improving water quality.**

High Speed Internet Access for Businesses and Citizens

The Board of Supervisors understands that the availability of high-speed internet service at an affordable cost will aid in economic development, education, and general quality of life within Mathews County.

Actions:

- *The county's Industrial Development Authority has been asked to work with staff to investigate ways to encourage private firms to provide high speed internet service in the county, including, but not limited to financial incentives where necessary.*
- *The Board supports the construction of a fiber optic "backbone" through the Middle Peninsula and Northern Neck as a means of providing open access to internet service providers in the region, thereby increasing long-term availability of high-speed broadband service to our citizens.*

Housing Options for Senior Citizens

The Board of Supervisors recognizes that many seniors must leave the county as they age due to the fact that suitable, low maintenance residential options in various price ranges are not available in the county. In order to allow these citizens to "age in place" in their home county, the government must encourage the provision of these housing options, including assisted living facilities.

Actions:

- *The Board has requested the Planning Commission to utilize staff or other volunteers to research zoning options and best practices from other localities that can be used to facilitate the provision of senior housing options in Mathews County.*
- *The Board will consider amendments to county land use ordinances that will encourage and facilitate the provision of senior housing in a range of prices in Mathews County.*
- *The Board will instruct staff that it should encourage creative methods for the provision of a range of senior housing choices within the county, in keeping with the county comprehensive plan and ordinances.*
- **Industrial Development Authority should continue its efforts to attract senior housing options.**

Planning for the Future

The Board of Supervisors understands the need to prepare for future growth and to guide such growth in a way that is in keeping with the lifestyle and environment that Mathews County residents treasure. The Board therefore supports careful planning for the future of our county.

Actions:

- *The Board will request the Planning Commission to utilize staff to research subdivision regulations that will further aid in the protection of the county's environmental resources.*
- *The Board will request the Planning Commission to clearly identify in the comprehensive plan those areas that are suitable for business development, including areas for waterfront/marine services.*
- *The Board will request the Planning Commission to consider future expansion boundaries for the Court House Sanitary District as a part of the comprehensive planning process.*
- *The Board will ~~fund~~ **consider** an update of the previous study regarding central water service in the Court House area in order to determine its current feasibility.*

Public Access to the Water

The Board of Supervisors acknowledges the importance of protecting existing public access to our waterways as well as providing additional public access in the future. Public access to waterways is a major key to developing the eco-tourism segment of the county's economy. It also enhances the quality of life for our residents.

Actions:

- *The Board of Supervisors will commit necessary funds to maintain and improve the public access facilities that already exist.*

- *The Board will direct staff to seek grant funding to develop public access areas, with a major emphasis on the East River Boatyard property.*
- *The Board will continue to support the Middle Peninsula Chesapeake Bay Public Access Authority in its mission to develop and manage public access to our waterways on a regional basis.*

Communication with Citizens

The Board of Supervisors acknowledges that an informed public is better able to participate in government in a meaningful way. The Board also acknowledges that, lacking extensive penetration by cable television and high-speed internet, informing the public can be a challenging task. The Board is equally interested in receiving feedback from citizens with regard to county services.

Actions:

- *The Board will provide citizens with an opportunity to express their opinions and to provide suggestions through the county website and other means.*
- *The Board will encourage Board members and staff to take every opportunity to inform and educate our citizens with regard to county programs, laws, and opportunities. The Board supports improvements to the county's website in order to provide access to information about the county and its government. Staff will work with local news media to further develop a recurring meeting/program calendar that will be easily accessible to Mathews County citizens.*
- *The Board is committed to diversity of representation on the county's various Boards and Commissions. Board members will seek out potential applicants who represent the entire population.*
- **The Board will, in the future, investigate the potential for greater use of cable television via a public access channel.**

Governing

The Board of Supervisors acknowledges that the citizens must have faith and trust in their government. The Board has recently adopted bylaws and a Code of Ethics that is reviewed and approved on an annual basis. The Board will continue to evaluate its efforts to govern fairly and openly.

Actions:

- *The Board will make every effort to govern fairly and consistently, knowing that every decision adds to this Board's record of governance.*
- *The Board will make efforts to make services more convenient and accessible to citizens, including encouraging certain constitutional offices to provide extended hours on a limited basis to accommodate our commuting public. **The Board discussed the possibility of extending business hours until 6:00 p.m. one evening per week.***
- *The Board will evaluate its progress on governing on an annual basis through a retreat work session.*
- *The Board will direct staff to continuously work toward greater efficiency and effectiveness in county government.*

Preservation and Management of Assets

The Board of Supervisors understands that the care and management of county buildings, grounds, and historic sites is an important part of its job. The county is blessed with a number of valuable public assets which must be maintained for future generations.

Actions:

- *The Board will, to the extent possible, continue to invest in the preservation of its historic assets, including the Courthouse Green, New Point Comfort Light, Fort Nonsense, and the Tompkins Cottage.*
- *The Board will continue to budget adequate funds to maintain and improve county buildings and grounds, as needed.*

- *The Board will consider application for a state matching grant to enable the county to conduct, through the Department of Historic Resources, an historic assessment of the county. In addition, the Board will support future efforts to assist preservation of buildings in the Court House through historic district designation, which may provide tax benefits for building owners.*

Taxation and Revenue

The Board of Supervisors acknowledges that the county is largely dependent upon taxation of real property and personal property for the revenues necessary to operate the county government and school system. While the Board recognizes that the commercial or industrial tax base will always be limited due to the location of Mathews County and the size of the population, it is important to identify other revenue sources where possible so as to keep the county reasonably affordable from a local taxation standpoint.

- *The Board will work closely with the Virginia Association of Counties to identify and support additional sources of revenue that will lessen reliance on real and personal property taxes.*
- **The Board will investigate the possibility of adopting a meals tax in the future.**
- **The Board will consider semiannual collection of personal property taxes.**
- **The Board will review the tax codes of other jurisdictions in order to identify other sources of revenue.**