

The Town of Washington

"THE FIRST WASHINGTON OF ALL"

January 15, 2021

2:00 p.m.

Draft Minutes

- CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Fred Catlin opened the electronically held work session at 2:00 p.m. Council members Mary Ann Kuhn, Patrick O'Connell, Brad Schneider, Gail Swift and Joe Whited were present. Town Clerk Barbara Batson was present.
- Discussion of Town's presentation at the upcoming Board of Supervisor's meeting: Mayor Catlin said that the meeting was a work session with a topic of identifying why a boundary line adjustment (BLA), to include all of the Black Kettle property, benefitted the greater Rappahannock community. The mayor invited comments from members of the public, who included Caroline Anstey and John Sullivan.

The attendees brought up the following benefits, as well as concerns, regarding a boundary line adjustment (BLA) as it pertains to a proposal for development of the Black Kettle property:

1. The proposed development would possibly contain the County's Food Pantry, a community center, a park, preserved wetlands, an outside amphitheater, quarters for local non-profits, and possibly the County's relocated public library.
2. Through the Town's Architectural Review Board (ARB) (which the County does not have), there is some control over the kind of establishment that would be on this important corner along RT. 211. People over the years have speculated that a convenience store or gas station might be ruinous for the County if placed in this spot and by requiring it to go through the Town's ARB, that concern could be eliminated.
3. There are liability issues if the sewer were extended beyond the Town boundaries into another jurisdiction (the County) if there were a catastrophic event that occurred in the County portion.
4. There are jurisdictional limitations established as part of the initial bond agreement that prevent the Town from extending beyond its boundaries.
5. If the Town allowed a precedent for the sewer line to be extended beyond the Town boundary, the Town would be unable to control the use of adjoining properties that, under this new precedent, would get a sewer hook-up and whose industry might sap all of (or even exceed) the sewer capacity of the Town, to the detriment of its citizens. The impact of an over-stretched sewer would then affect the local County citizens who do not reside in the Town.
6. In addition to the corner, the entire length of Warren Avenue (a well-travelled corridor in the County) would come under the jurisdiction of the ARB, thereby ensuring a standard for all construction along its length. The ARB ensures that property values are

sustained by ensuring that construction does not degrade the value of the property or neighboring properties, thereby maintaining the real estate tax value of the properties.

7. The Town has developed a Planned Unit Development (PUD) protocol that would be available for the entire property if it were within the Town's boundaries. This would help the owner realize the vision he has for the property and for the Rappahannock community's benefit.
8. Because of the extensive wetlands within the property, the owner could not build as extensively as he envisions without the sewer extension, which can only happen with the BLA. This would hinder the benefit to the County's citizens from the services that would be provided. It would also remove the possibility for the County to receive additional tax revenue through real estate taxes for the improvements on the property.
9. The Rappahannock County Comprehensive Plan speaks to the importance of funneling growth and development in and around the County's villages, of which the Town of Washington is one, rather than allowing it to occur intermittently throughout the County. By consolidating the growth to designated areas such as this one, the County's scenic beauty would be preserved.
10. Moreover, without the ability to funnel any growth into the villages, the County's restrictive zoning ordinances could be seen as legally restrictive and deemed void by a court of law. The Town wishes to work with the County to ensure that there is access to County citizens by welcoming limited, well-planned growth into its community.
11. By extending the boundaries, the Town would be able to zone the property that comes in via a BLA in a way that is beneficial to the owner, controls growth, and benefits the entire Rappahannock community.
12. Perhaps another way to go would be to propose to only build on the property within the Town boundaries initially and develop the property that is in the county at a future time.
13. The general consensus of participants in the discussion was that the Town Council has not officially been approached about this project nor voted on it. If and when that approach were to happen, the Town Council and Town officials would look forward to working in partnership with the Board of Supervisors and County officials in a manner that is transparent, public, and beneficial to all of the citizens of Rappahannock County, among which Town citizens are counted.

THE MEETING WAS CONTINUED TILL February 8, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL IS FEBRUARY 8, 2021.

Barbara Batson, Town Clerk