

# Northampton Civic League Minutes 03/01/2005

The March meeting was called to order at 7:15 pm by NHCL Vice President Wendell Midkiff. There were 14 people present.

The Vice President opened with a pledge to the flag.

Secretary Matt Asay read the minutes for the February meeting. The minutes were approved with no corrections

Treasurer Paul Grimes presented a brief report on the league's finances. As of March 1, 2005 the league had 44.62 in our bank account and 20.00 in cash for a total of 64.62. There was one recent new member. During the last month \$45 was donated to help defray the cost of fliers printed by Butch Heath. The actual cost was 28.88.

The majority of the meeting consisted of presentations on components of Hampton's draft Community Plan which is now being presented to various community groups for comment. The presentations were made by Keith Cannady and Don Whipple of Hampton's Planning Department.

Mr. Cannady began with an overview of the Community Plan process. The planning process is required by state law typically on a 5-year cycle with a 20-year look into the future. It helps a community plan for orderly development. It helps a city like ours prioritize how we use our resources and provides a way for citizen's to both understand and influence the choices the city makes. The current revision of the Community plan started in January of 2003 and combines the old Strategic Plan and Comprehensive Plan into a single document. Phase 1 gathered community input via a series of subcommittees on 8 different policy areas and culminated with a set of visions and goals for each. Phase 2, in progress now, formulates specific actions to implement those visions in each of 5 Plan elements (Land Use & Community Design, Transportation, Housing & Neighborhoods, Community Facilities, Economic Development, and Environmental Stewardship). Only two of the components were to be presented at the meeting because of the time needed to adequately cover each one.

Mr. Cannady then gave the first presentation on the Land Use & Community Design component of the Plan. He informed us that less than 10% of Hampton's land is left to be developed (the rest is either already developed or can't be developed due to environmental considerations). Of this 9.6%, half of it is in parcels of 5 acres or less. For this reason much of Hampton's future development will have to come from redevelopment. The plan identifies 5 strategic areas of the city for concentrated investment of redevelopment funds: Buckroe, Coliseum Central, Downtown Hampton, Phoebus, Kecoughtan Road Corridor, and North King Street Corridor. He also identified a number of "Key changes" in this Land Use plan from previous Hampton plans:

- "Residential Transition" is being removed as a land use category. Properties previously bearing this designation would be classified as either residential or commercial depending upon their current use.
- A new "Open Space" land use category is being added for areas like Sandy Bottom Park.
- The definition of the "Business/Industrial" category is being expanded to allow for more office-park type uses that are becoming more common than manufacturing and assembly.
- The various "Residential" land use classifications are being expanded from 2 to 4 to better reflect the allowable densities and protect existing single family housing stock.
- A "Mixed Use" category is being added to accommodate urban developments that include a mixture of residential, commercial, and public use areas in close proximity. This kind of development is envisioned in the Coliseum Central and Downtown Hampton areas.

Mr. Cannady then used a large map of the city to illustrate some of the changes zoning designation in this Land Use plan from Hampton's previous plan. He answered questions from our members and emphasized that this plan is still a draft and subject to changes before it is approved by the Planning Commission and City Council.

After this presentation, Mr. Whipple gave a brief overview of the Transportation component of the plan. The Transportation plan encompasses bikes, buses, and pedestrians as well as cars, but most of the presentation focused on the cars. He discussed the overall issues and constraints that limited the available funds for transportation projects and then presented a list of 30 projects selected as priority projects for Hampton for 2005-2025. The ones that will most directly impact the Northampton area are:

- Saunders Road - Widen (Big Bethel to Newport News city line)
- Commander Shephard Boulevard - Phase 1
- Commander Shephard Boulevard - Phase 2
- Hampton Roads Center Parkway / Big Bethel grade separation [Overpass!]
- Todds Lane - Widen (Aberdeen to NN city line - add center turn lane)
- Todds Lane / Big Bethel - Upgrade intersection
- Coliseum/Mercury flyover removal [!!!]
- Coliseum Mall Redevelopment - Road extensions on mall property

The HRC Parkway overpass and mall flyover removal projects prompted a number of member comments. There were questions about the cost versus the benefit of removing the flyover. Many people were concerned about the traffic impact of building an overpass for the parkway at Big Bethel. Most didn't see the need for the project. Mr. Whipple indicated that the projects were based on projected increases in traffic and that if future circumstances didn't dictate their need they wouldn't be built.

Mr. Whipple and Mr. Cannady then finished up by talking about the next steps in the approval process. More information is available at [www.hampton.gov/community-plan](http://www.hampton.gov/community-plan). You can also send in a comment form to: Planning Department, One Franklin St., Suite 603, Hampton, VA 23669 or call 727-6140 for more information.

Karen Duncan then gave a presentation about the plans she was working on for a Community Yard sale during Neighborhood Month. We discussed the merits of a centralized yard sale (for example at the Northampton Community Center) versus individual tables at people's houses. The consensus seemed to be that sales at individual houses were preferable to reduce the load on the league's organizing effort. Ms. Duncan mentioned the upcoming March 18th deadline to file an Intent to Apply form and the April 8th deadline for the actual application. It was moved and seconded to have Ms. Duncan pursue the project as our Neighborhood Month project and keep everyone informed via email.

Discussion then turned the flier distribution efforts prior to the meeting. Someone confirmed that fliers had gone out to houses in Michael's Woods. Harold Pitman reported on his attempts to distribute via local churches. He indicated that most of them needed a longer lead time than he had anticipated to approve the fliers prior to distribution.

Butch Heath talked about his request for members to email ideas on improving participation. He indicated that he had gotten a couple of ideas but not very many. Mr. Pitman talked about putting up signs publicizing the meeting on several streets. Darryl Krauch talked about having a block party when the piping over of the ditch in back of his street was complete. It was suggested that a story about a block party and the filling in of this 12-foot wide 6-foot deep eyesore ("It all began with a flier...") might make a good publicity hook for increasing awareness of the Northampton Civic League.

Finally Mr. Heath expressed concern about difficulties with sharing information via email with all the league's members and prospects. Matt Asay offered to forward information from any member to the list he maintains. He also offered to send the current list to any member who wants to do their own mailings to the group.

The meeting was adjourned at about 8:45 pm. The next general meeting was scheduled for Tuesday April 5th at the Northampton Community Center.

**Matt Asay, NHCL Secretary**