

THOMAS JEFFERSON PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION
Draft Minutes of February 5, 2009 Meeting

City of Charlottesville

David E. Brown
Jason Pearson, Treasurer

Albemarle County

Sally H. Thomas
Ann H. Mallek

Fluvanna County

Charles W. Allbaugh, Vice Chair
Chris Fairchild

Greene County

Carl Schmitt
Andrea Wilkinson

Louisa County

Richard Havasy
Jackson Wright

Nelson County

Fred Boger
Connie Brennan, Chair

Commissioners Present:

David Brown – Charlottesville
Jason Pearson – Charlottesville
Sally Thomas – Albemarle County
Chris Fairchild – Fluvanna County
Carl Schmitt – Greene County
Richard Havasy—Louisa County
Jack Wright – Louisa County
Fred Boger – Nelson County

Commissioners Absent:

Ann Mallek – Albemarle County
Jeri Allen – Greene County
Charles Allbaugh – Fluvanna County
Connie Brennan – Nelson County

Staff Present:

Billie Campbell, Chief Operating Officer
Melissa Barlow, Director of Trans Pgrms

Guests Present:

Peter Kleeman
Randy Wheeler
Susan Seidler, Senior Navigator
Kim Tarantino, Senior Navigator

Call to Order: Treasurer Jason Pearson called the meeting to order.

Matters from the Public: Peter Kleeman addressed the Commission regarding the General Assembly's consideration of authorization of a Regional Transit Authority (RTA). The RTA would initially include Charlottesville and Albemarle, with the option for surrounding counties to join at a later time. Mr. Kleeman encouraged the TJPDC to participate in the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) by appointing someone to fill the position of TJPDC representative. Mr. Kleeman also recommended that the TJPDC consider expanding the boundaries for the MPO, which may enable the region to tap into more federal funding.

Consent Agenda: On a motion by Carl Schmitt, seconded by David Brown, the Commission approved the consent agenda, consisting of the minutes of the January 8, 2009 meeting and Resolution for the FY10 RideShare grant, with Jason Pearson and Jack Wright abstaining on the minutes. There were no Intergovernmental Reviews (IGRs) for February.

Commissioner Roundtable: The topic for February was "Tax Relief."

Greene County: Carl Schmitt reported that Greene County has a program to provide property tax relief for the elderly and people with disabilities. The maximum income level for eligibility is \$26,000 and the maximum net worth is \$75,000. Last year, 180 people were granted the exemption, which is more than there has been in prior years, possibly due to greater exposure in the media. The program resulted in a reduction \$40,000 in taxes, but has been well-received by the public.

Albemarle County: Sally Thomas distributed a copy of the printout of the Albemarle County web site on the Tax Relief Program for the Elderly & disabled. The amount of relief is determined by calculating an applicant's total income and net worth, with relief ranging from 20% to 100%. Last year, the County exceeded the amount budgeted for the program. The current maximum lot size is 10 acres; it had been five in the past. There is no cap on the tax relief on the property, if certain criteria are met.

Louisa County: Jack Wright reported that Louisa County also has a program of tax relief for the elderly and disabled. The income limit had been \$22,000 for several years, but has recently been reviewed and raised, with a sliding scale for relief. Eligible property includes a house and up to 10 acres. The current income limit is \$40,000. Relief can be 50% to 100% based on a matrix of criteria. 425 citizens were eligible and 300 applied and were granted relief. The program is publicized well and staff members help citizens complete the application. The impact on the budget is approximately \$300,000. The county has not seen any evidence of abuse of the program. Jack added that Louisa dedicates ¼ of one cent of its property tax to the Fluvanna/Louisa Housing Foundation. The funds are used for low interest loans and down-payment assistance. Over three years, \$285,000 has been donated to the fund. The program is not advertised widely. Clients must complete homeowner counseling in order to qualify for the program.

Topic for March: The Roundtable topic for March will be land taxation for agriculture and forestal use.

Senior Navigator: Kim Tarantino, Director of Communications or SeniorNavigator gave a presentation on the statewide non-profit and its Local Government Partnership Program. SeniorNavigator was founded eight years ago and gives a place to start for seniors and those who care for them. The program includes a comprehensive and holistic on-line directory, with quick search and customized search capabilities. A needs assessment to all uses 12 questions to generate a basic geriatric program. The Ask an Expert feature connects users to 58 subject matter experts. Users can submit written questions and receive a response within 48 hours. The goal of the program is empowerment, to facilitate independent living for as long as possible. For those not owning or using computers, there are SeniorNavigator Centers with access to computers and trained staff to assist people. There are 14 SeniorNavigator Centers in the Thomas Jefferson Planning District, including all of JABA's Senior Centers, libraries, and UVA and Martha Jefferson Hospitals. There is at least one Center in every jurisdiction across the state. SeniorNavigator is governed by a Board made up of representatives with diverse backgrounds. Dr. Richard Lindsay is on the Board for the Charlottesville Area. Jim Roberts is the Board Chair.

The Local Government Partnership Program provides a way for localities to co-brand SeniorNavigator on their own web pages, assistance in marketing resources to a broader audience, provide access to Virginia resources to long distance caregivers, a comprehensive annual marketing plan, co-branded marketing materials, training for staff, and annual customized reports. The sliding annual fee scale is based on population. SeniorNavigator can offer a 10% discount if all localities in the TJPDC sign up for the Local Government Partnership Program.

Local Food Connection: Gordon Walker, Executive Director of JABA, addressed the Commission on this topic. Ann Mallek had attended the last meeting, but was unable to be present at the Commission meeting. A background piece on the Local Food Connection was included in the meeting packet. The Local Food Connection is looking for a host and fiscal agent and has approached TJPDC to explore the possibility. The Commission authorized further exploration into the possibility, to be considered at a future meeting.

TJACH Board: Billie Campbell presented four additional candidates for appointment to the Board for the Thomas Jefferson Area Coalition for the Homeless (TJACH). The four candidates are: Donna

Baker of the AIDS/HIV Services Group and Adriana Nicholson of PACEM, the newly elected Chair and Vice Chair of the TJACH Service Providers Council, and Janet Matthews (representing building owner Tom Shadyac) and Tommy Everett of the FSCP Steering Committee. On a motion by Sally Thomas, seconded by Dick Havasy, the Commission appointed the four additional members to complete the initial TJACH Board.

Mayor & Chairs Billie Campbell briefed the Commission on the discussion of the Mayor & Chairs at their meeting on January 23. The Mayor and Chairs made some recommendations to forward to the Commission for action at a later time: 1) Change the name of this group to reflect the merger of the Mayor & Chairs group with the Chief Administrative Officers; 2) The Mayor/Chairs and CAOs agreed to hold a media event the afternoon of February 13, following release of the House and Senate versions of the amended state budget scheduled for Sunday, February 8. The purpose is to emphasize to our communities the impacts of state funding reductions on specific programs at the local level; and 3) The group also asked the Commission to consider adopting a policy on broadband and to identify other issues on which to take a regional stand. Specific items will be brought back to the Commission for action at future meetings.

Other Business: Melissa Barlow announced that an Open House is being planned featuring a conversation with Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) member Butch Davies. The date is not yet confirmed, but may be held on March 5, immediately prior to the TJPDC Commission meeting. If this is the case, the Commission agreed to defer the Roundtable discussion to allow for a later start time for the meeting. Melissa also announced that the enabling legislation for the Regional Transit Authority (RTA) had passed in the Senate earlier in the day.

Adjournment: There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.