

TOWN CRIER

This is the 7th issue of what will be a periodic communication to the citizens of Cape Charles. John Burdiss is solely responsible for the content.

Topics addressed in this issue (November 14, 2007) are:

1. The STIP, the dock and more
2. Notable agenda items at the 11/13/07 council meeting
3. Constituents are invited

The STIP, the dock and more - it is all about the water

Agenda items 7.A., 7.B., 7.C. & 7.G. were all related to the prospective development of very significant maritime related businesses on the south side of the Town Harbor, primarily on Town owned parcels, including the location of the old "Fish House". Cape Charles was founded to take advantage of its strategic proximity to Hampton Roads and our harbor was dug out to serve the railroad. Our location, the harbor and water access in general are the keys to the proposed development, just as they were for the railroad.

Developers, including several prominent life-long Eastern Shore residents & other experienced business leaders, are poised to buy the former STIP property from Northampton Co. The group, South Port Investors, LLC ("South Port"), has far reaching plans to make use of the STIP & the attendant leased land. The leased land owned by the Town is under the control of the County since the IDA deeded the STIP to the County last year and would thus be controlled by South Port upon purchase from the County. The STIP was granted a 40-yr. lease in 1996 to aid in this type of development.

South Port continues to refine its integrated plans to utilize the waterfront access, the STIP land being purchased and the leased parcels, plus the lone building at the STIP. The implications to Cape Charles of these long term plans, the millions dollars to be invested, and the prospects of significant numbers of jobs are very exciting. The impact could very well rival the establishment of the railroad over 100 years ago!

As a director since 1998 of the IDA (the former owner of the STIP), I can unequivocally say that nothing remotely comparable to the prospects offered by these developers was ever available for consideration at the STIP or certainly this close to fruition. The standard theme of the STIP from its inception (and among the reasons it floundered) was overwhelming reliance if not total dependence upon government support for purported business prospects at the STIP. Thankfully current development plans rely upon private funds - not taxpayers' funds.

Council has deliberated diligently regarding the leases and the option to purchase that were approved last night. It is expected the final purchase option set for hearing next month will likewise be approved. The benefits to the Town alluded to above could be staggering; the protections to the Town in the approvals granted include requirements

that development actually occur to trigger a purchase; plus the existing zoning controls remain with the Town. If the development occurs as expected, the income streams to the Town could be significant from lease revenues and/or proceeds from sale.

The prospective development of the parcel located between the South Port project and Bay Shore Concrete by Harbor Development Group (HDG) also anticipates the prospective sale of some Town property. However, in addition to other contingencies and the approval of the project proposed by HDG, the .63 acre parcel desired by HDG is actually encompassed by a parcel that South Port will control when the purchase of the STIP is consummated. Nonetheless, the prospects of development on the entire south side of the Town harbor have never been so active in the 10 years since I have lived here.

Other notable agenda items – 11/13/07 meeting of Town Council

- I have grouped some items for convenience; all items on last night's agenda passed unanimously, except for Councilman Brown's abstention on the terms for a new lease with the Cape Charles Volunteer Fire Company (CCVFC) and his "no" vote on the change of location and time for Council meetings.
- The CCVFC lease was approved; terms: 40 years; \$1/year; 1 year cancellation clause; relinquished all but about 1,800 SF of Town owned space on the ground floor; and included use for "Town" functions in the "fire hall". Mayor Sullivan rightly encouraged CCVFC to also be receptive to Town related functions (not Town sponsored) such as the Renovators Ball and the Epiphany Party whose primary purposes are to raise money for Central Park and other community uses.
- The consummation of the CCVFC lease allows better use of the "Town Hall" building, including making room for needed offices and a small conference room in the current Council chambers. That utilization is also the impetus for the movement of Council meetings to the Cape Charles Hotel's banquet room. This new location will be a more accessible and more functional public meeting space. The Council also agreed to establish a new, uniform starting time of 7:00 PM for all future regular Council meetings, including any necessary public hearings that may be purposefully scheduled for the same evening as a regular Council meeting.
- Council approved the execution of a \$59.8k contract with Land Studio as part of the continued development of Central Park and authorized bidding for the construction of the gazebo to include \$25k of previously budgeted Town funds.
- Finally, Council agreed to schedule workshops/informational meetings to discuss: the implications of the harbor development plans; decals for boat trailers; and the ongoing project to clarify and define alleys as to their uses for public purposes.
- Note: Thanks to Jimmy Marvel in particular and all those involved, especially citizen volunteers, in starting programs for youth at Central Park and beyond and for the leadership of Ann Rutledge, and citizen volunteers, in programming for seniors and others being offered at the Library.

You are invited!

My office is at 117 Mason Ave., Suite E (next to Kelly's Pub) - 5:15 – 6:15 PM on Tuesday, November 20th. This is your opportunity to come, voice opinions, ask questions and learn more about what your Town government and your Council are doing to honor our duty to you by always striving to serve the best interests of the Town with each action we take. *Please come; we will all benefit.* Your responses and/or inquiries to anything in the Town Crier or about "Town" business are welcome at johnburdiss@baycrk.net