

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

A G E N D A

TOWN OF CHINCOTEAGUE, VIRGINIA

March 11, 2014 - 7:00 P.M. – Council Chambers - Town Hall

CALL TO ORDER

INVOCATION

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

AGENDA REVIEW/DISCLOSURES

1. Approval of the February 11, 2014 meeting minutes
2. Comprehensive Plan Update
 - a) Consider additional Demographic Information
 - b) Review List of Reports/Studies
 - c) Review Topic 4 Public Sewer and Water Utilities
 - d) Review Chapter 5 Community Facilities
3. Information/Discussion Items
4. Commission Members Announcements or Comments
(Note: Roberts Rules do not allow for discussion under comment period)

ADJOURN

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
11 February 2014
MINUTES

Members Present:

Mr. Ray Rosenberger, Chairman
Mrs. Mollie Cherrix, Vice Chairperson
Mr. Tripp Muth, Councilman
Mr. Michael Dendler
Mr. Steve Katasetos

Members Absent:

Mr. Jeff Potts

Mr. Spiro Papadopoulos

William Neville, Planning Director

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Rosenberger called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm in the Council Chambers

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

One (1) member of the public was present. There was no comment.

AGENDA REVIEW/DISCLOSURES

Commissioner Katasetos moved approval of the agenda as presented, seconded by Councilman Muth. The agenda was unanimously approved.

1. Approval of the January 14, 2014 meeting minutes

Approval of the January 20, 2014 workshop minutes

Commissioner Papadopoulos moved for approval of the minutes with corrections, seconded by Commissioner Katasetos. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Comprehensive Plan 5-year Update

- Review Topic 1 State Code Compliance

Commissioners supported the adoption of the same amendment regarding Coastal Resource Management as approved by Accomack County and VIMS with minor revisions shown in the Staff Report. It was agreed that Exhibit 2 should remain in its current location and an enlargement of the DEQ shoreline assessment map would be added as an insert following the Coastal Resource Management section.

A motion to include this change in the Planning Commission draft update was made by Commissioner Papadopoulos, seconded by Councilman Muth, and approved unanimously.

- Review Topic 2 Private Roads
Staff proposed a narrative and implementation strategies for Private Streets that could be added to Chapter 6 – Transportation. Commissioners discussed the need to identify minimum geometric and design standards, and requested comment by Public Works Director Spurlock. Discussion continued on the topic of private right of way versus public access. In the second paragraph of the narrative, the words ‘and public safety’ was proposed to be added to the end of the first sentence.

A motion to include this change with the proposed correction and the addition of the private street map in the Planning Commission draft update was made by Councilman Muth, seconded by Commissioner Katsetos and approved unanimously.

- Review Chapter 1 Community Profile
Commission members reviewed the corrected 2010 Census demographic data provided by Staff and made several requests for corrections and additional references for review of socio-economic characteristics of the Town. New sections on Floodplain and Tree Cover were acceptable as presented. An expanded section on Groundwater with information about watersheds and aquifers was recommended by Commissioner Papadopoulos. Staff was requested to provide the revised sections without redlines for review and to rework the paragraph on page 1-11 regarding projects for future growth.
- Review Chapter 6 Transportation

The proposed Private Street narrative and strategies from Topic 2 were proposed to be inserted after the Public Street strategies on page 6-4 of the Comprehensive Plan.

Chairman Rosenberger confirmed that the next regular meeting of the Planning Commission would include a review of Topic 4 and Chapter 5 on the agenda.

3. Information/Discussion Items

Staff provided a brief update on planning activities including comment on a proposed Chincoteague Bay TMDL in Maryland, and Ordinance Committee work on the Town Floodplain Ordinance.

4. Commission Members Announcements or Comments

Councilman Muth provided information about the progress of rebuilding Chincoteague Inn by July 4th with a \$1.2 million dollar investment in the community. He mentioned the possibility of redevelopment of the Landmark Plaza property in the future.

ADJOURN

Councilman Muth moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Katsetos. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Raymond R. Rosenberger Sr., Chairman

The next regular meeting is scheduled for March 11, 2014.



STAFF REPORT

To: Planning Commission
From: William Neville, Director of Planning
Date: March 11, 2014
Subject: 5-year Comprehensive Plan Review

The Town of Chincoteague adopted a fully revised Comprehensive Plan on January 4, 2010. The comprehensive plan is designed to be a general guide for growth and future development for the next 20 years. The Code of Virginia (§ 15.2-2230) requires that at least once every five years the comprehensive plan shall be reviewed by the local planning commission to determine whether it is advisable to amend the plan.

To allow adequate time for review of the plan, the implementation steps, and new legislative requirements, the Planning Commission identified a strategy and schedule to provide Town Council with a recommendation for any changes prior to October 1, 2014.

The next several regular meetings will continue the overall review of specific chapters of the Comprehensive Plan, as well as separate topics that were identified as a priority over the next 5 years. Chapter 5 – Community Facilities and Topic 4 will be presented for further consideration at the March meeting.

- Topic 1 – State Code Compliance
- Topic 2 – Private Roads vs. Public Roads
- Topic 3 – Land Use Plan
- Topic 4 – Public Sewer and Water Utilities**
- Topic 5 – Small Town Character
- Topic 6 – Improved Community Services

Additional demographic information has been assembled at the Commission's request and is included in this report for consideration. A list of reports and studies that are relevant to the Comprehensive Plan Update has also been prepared for review by the Commission.

Commissioners are encouraged to edit the attached sections of the Comprehensive Plan, or proposed alternate revisions that may be approved at the meeting. As we work through the 'chapter by chapter' review, the approved changes will be assembled into a complete draft document for public review.

Town of Chincoteague Comprehensive Plan Update 2015

List of Reports/Studies

The Comprehensive Plan recommendations are supported by current research and analysis contained in the following Reports/Studies. These documents are incorporated by reference (in no particular order) and may be considered as an element of the adopted Comprehensive Plan.

- A. Wastewater Advisory Committee Report (June 2013)
- B. Preliminary Engineering Report, Sanitary Sewer System Phase 1 (March 2011)
- C. Hazard Mitigation Plan
- D. Storm Water Master Plan, Phase 1 and 2
- E. FEMA Flood Insurance Study
- F. Transit Development Plan
- G. Cemetery Master Plan
- H. Draft Recreational Facilities Plan
- I. Downtown Revitalization Plan
- J. Water Supply Plan, 2010
- K. Water System Master Plan, 2003 (2014 Update)
- L. Source Water Protection Plan, 2014
- M. VDOT Small Urban Area Plan
- N. Trail/Bicycle Plan

Other documents provide valuable information for future growth and change on Chincoteague Island and the surrounding environment that are not generally considered to be an element of the Comprehensive Plan.

- A. USFWS Comprehensive Conservation Plan
- B. Broadband
- C. Water Quality Management Plans
- D. Draft Joint Land Use Study – Wallops Island
- E. DEQ Seaside Area Management Plan, Dune/Shoreline

Town of Chincoteague Comprehensive Plan Update 2015

Topic 4 – Public Sewer and Water Utilities

Research of coastal communities completed by the Town Wastewater Advisory Committee in 2012 identified a relationship between the size of a Town and the transition to public responsibility for operating centralized water and sewer utility systems based on its capacity to finance and manage the new infrastructure.

The Town of Chincoteague continues to develop its public water system to serve all residents beginning in 1927, and continuing through current master plan improvements today. Changes since the 2010 Comprehensive Plan include:

- The Town currently serves approximately 3,550 lots with public water (2,500 residential, 1,000 commercial, 50 civic)
- Groundwater from wells on the mainland is treated and pumped to Chincoteague along the Route 175 causeway. Between 300,000 and 1.3 million gallons per day are delivered to our year round population/businesses (4,000) and peak-season visitors (25,000)
- Final approval of Well #__ with installation of a monitoring well to measure future saltwater intrusion
- Completion of a Groundwater Study, Source Water Protection Plan, Update to the Water System Master Plan, Installation of pump stations, improved treatment equipment, electronic monitoring system, repair of lines

The Virginia Health Department management of individual septic waste disposal systems and DEQ management of private wastewater treatment facilities includes many individual permits. Changes since the 2010 Comprehensive Plan include:

- State authorization of advanced individual septic mound systems designed by qualified private consultants
- WAC 3 year study and report to Town Council
- In 2012, Sunset Bay Utilities extended a force main from their private treatment plant to help remove as much as 7,800 gallons per day from failing septic fields and to support existing downtown businesses and civic buildings
- In the last 5 years, over 150 property owners on Chincoteague Island installed advanced treatment septic systems

Staff recommends that selected portions of the WAC report to Town Council should be included in the Comprehensive Plan update (see below).

The Town of Chincoteague regularly conducts a review of wastewater treatment alternatives for the future. Engineering studies were prepared in 1976, 1988, and 2008. With each review the Town decided that the time was not right for a centralized public wastewater treatment system due to affordability concerns and implications for growth and change that would be inconsistent with the Town identity.

Recent opportunities to encourage private investment in wastewater treatment infrastructure that would benefit the entire Town have been presented. In order to address these issues, the Town Council participated with Accomack County in the preparation of a grant funded regional wastewater study in 2011, and appointed five (5) representatives to a Town Wastewater Advisory Committee with the several goals to be completed by June 2013.

The Wastewater Advisory Committee recommends that Town Council adopt one or more of the following actions that will direct Town Staff efforts and create a working policy for the next steps toward creating a public wastewater utility on Chincoteague Island.

Continue current management responsibilities

- 1) Virginia Department of Health (VDH) will continue to permit, inventory, inspect, and improve private maintenance and repair of the Island's individual wastewater systems (cesspools, drainfields, etc.). VDH will continue to enforce violations identified by the Division of Shellfish Sanitation.

Town of Chincoteague will request VDH to expand its computerized reporting system to include public access to mapping, inspection and repair reports so that improvements can be documented. Town of Chincoteague will continue to encourage individual wastewater treatment systems that are properly maintained to meet current State regulations.

- 2) Town of Chincoteague will continue to encourage private (and USCG) wastewater treatment permit holders to provide service by voluntary connection within the Main Street Corridor small service area between Maddox Boulevard and Bunting Road.
- 3) Town of Chincoteague will regularly review and refine zoning ordinance and development standards for areas within new sewer service areas.

Implement a Short Term Future Solution

- 4) Town of Chincoteague will identify a potential Maddox Boulevard Corridor wastewater treatment service area and prepare the next phase of engineering studies, permit applications, and grant requests to determine its feasibility for operation as a publicly owned wastewater treatment facility similar to the private Sunset Bay Utilities facility.

Work toward a Long Term Future Solution

- 5) Town of Chincoteague will actively participate with Virginia State Agencies, Accomack County, and the Maryland Coastal Bays Program to revise the Comprehensive Conservation & Management Plan (CCMP) for monitoring and improving water quality in Chincoteague Bay, and will seek to continue working on a long range plan that reduces nutrient loads from septic drainfields to the surrounding waters of Chincoteague Island on a voluntary basis.

Wastewater Advisory Committee members unanimously agree that small steps should be taken to implement a plan for public wastewater utility service on Chincoteague Island. In addition, the solution should be expandable, should allow for private investment to meet interim needs and should not try to replace adequate State programs and responsibilities.

Town of Chincoteague Comprehensive Plan Update 2015

Formatted: Font: (Default) +Headings

Chapter 5 – Community Facilities & Services

Significant changes and completed projects have occurred within the last 5 years including:

- Renovation of the old elementary school gymnasium into the Island Activity Center
- Development of a new park at Mariners Point, expansion of Robert Reed Downtown Waterfront Park, Main Street Revitalization
- Addition of a new Town Well (#__)
- Expansion of the private sewer service area for Sunset Bay Utilities
- Expansion of the solid waste transfer Convenience Center
- Addition of fuel and ice sales at the Curtis Merritt Harbor of Refuge
- Expansion of the Museum of Chincoteague Island
- Expansion of the YMCA facilities and programs
- Transfer of E-911 services to the ESVA 911 Center

Chapter 5 should be revised to reflect recommendations of the Wastewater Advisory Committee, Hazard Mitigation Plan, and other current Reports/Studies.

As shown on Map 3, community facilities and services provided by the Town and other government agencies, to ensure the public's health, safety and welfare, must be monitored continually. This ensures that they are able to meet current and projected demand. The Town must have the ability to anticipate when and where expanded capacity will be needed for basic infrastructure such as roads, streets and sidewalks, sewer and water services, and storm drainage systems. Public facilities and services such as schools, parks, libraries, health care, and police and fire protection, also should be monitored to ensure availability when needed.

Education

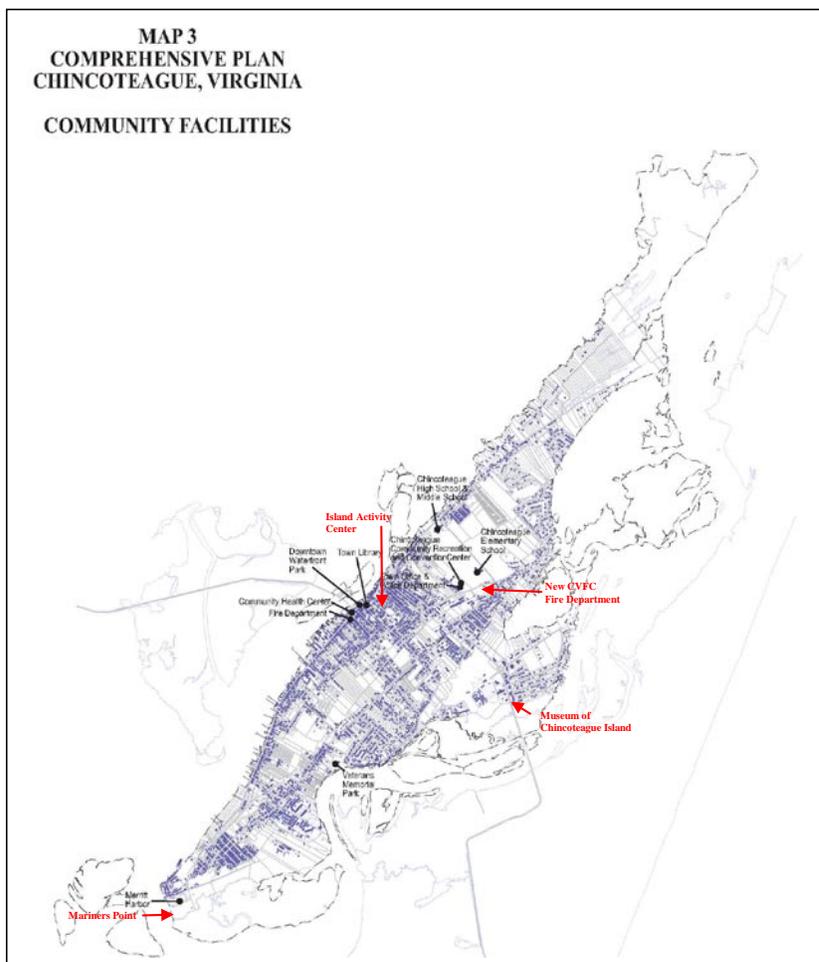
Two public schools are located in the Town of Chincoteague. Chincoteague Elementary School, located on Hallie Whealton Smith Drive, serves pre-kindergarteners through fifth graders and enrolled approximately 265 students in 2008. Chincoteague Middle School, located on Main Street, shares buildings with Chincoteague High School. This complex serves students in sixth grade through 12th grade and in 2008 had an enrollment of approximately 330.



Chincoteague has three public school facilities: the Chincoteague Elementary School; Chincoteague Middle School; and the Chincoteague High School.

The previous Comprehensive Plan noted that the elementary school's gymnasium was inadequate for serving the needs of the school and that gym programs were being conducted in the old elementary school gymnasium located across the street. The Plan also noted that onsite parking facilities at the elementary school were insufficient. The elementary school has since partitioned off a lunch/gym room for physical education programs and is no longer using the old elementary school facility. A \$10.4 million renovation project to the Chincoteague Middle/High School complex, including a new gymnasium, began in March 2005 and was completed in 2006.

The Eastern Shore Community College (ESCC) serves the residents of Accomack and Northampton Counties as a two-year institution of higher learning. The College is less than an hour's drive from Chincoteague. It is accredited by the "Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools" to award associate degrees in arts and sciences. ESCC occupies a 115-acre site on U.S. Route 13 and includes classrooms, laboratories, a bookstore, a lecture hall, administrative offices, and a Library-Learning Resources Center. The College is open during the entire year on a semester system.



In addition to open enrollment continuing education classes, the College also hosts a Workforce Development Program that offers broad range of cost-effective education and training services to individuals, businesses, industries, and government and professional organizations in support of economic development and community enrichment. The Workforce Development staff offers customized programs to meet specific workforce training needs and can schedule training on-site at a business to save time and travel costs.

Library

A citizens group restored the Wallace Jester Barber Shop, one of the oldest frame commercial buildings in Town. It opened in 1995 as the Chincoteague Island Library. The Island Library, located on Main Street, is affiliated with the Eastern Shore Public Library system but is not owned or managed by the County. It is operated by volunteers and funded by contributions. The Town supports the library's planned expansion in the downtown and has donated land for the project. A building design has been prepared for the expanded facility that reflects the architectural character of the Island circa 1900. Fund raising to complete the project is completed. In December 2006, the Library was awarded a \$50,000 grant from the Argyll Fund of the Norfolk Foundation to help fund the expansion.

In 2004 and 2005, the Library received grants from the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities to support the first phase of a long-term effort to document the disappearing cultural tradition of Chincoteague Island. The Chincoteague Island Community Heritage Project will result in the creation of a permanent photo and oral history archive at the Library. The Library is open to the public year-round, Monday through Saturday, except Thursday, from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Library hours on Thursdays are 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Museum

The Museum of Chincoteague Island, a non-profit educational institution, is located on the left side of Maddox Blvd., just before the entrance to the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge. Established in 1966, the Oyster Museum has now been fully remodeled and renamed to include the history of both the town and the oyster, the people and the culture. The new Museum of Chincoteague Island officially re-opened its doors in 2011 after years of planning and an extensive effort to set up displays with good lighting and well written explanations. Misty and her foal, Stormy, remain on display, as well as movie memorabilia and vintage Misty collectables. The Museum features special programming and sponsors the Roads Scholars programs on Chincoteague. The museum is open Friday to Sunday from 11 a.m.-5 p.m., from April through Thanksgiving weekend.

Fire & Emergency Services

Fire and emergency services on the Island are provided by the Chincoteague Volunteer Fire Company, a combination paid/volunteer department jointly supported by the Town and Accomack County. Located on Main Street, the Company operates out of one station and is comprised of 25 active volunteer members and 85 life members. Paid staff includes five paramedics, who are on duty 24 hours a day, all year around. The Department owns four pumper/engines, a 75-foot ladder truck, a rescue squad, and two Advanced Life Support (ALS) ambulances. The Company provides firefighting, hazardous material (HAZMAT) response, ALS emergency medical, and vehicle rescue (extrication) services. **A site for new building construction has been identified near the Town Municipal Center on Deep Hole Road with plans underway for relocation within the next 5 years.**



The Chincoteague Volunteer Fire Department is an important part of the community, responsible for the Island's herd of wild ponies and the annual Pony Swim and Auction.

The Town makes a direct annual appropriation to the Chincoteague Volunteer Fire Company **for equipment and the operation of the rescue squad.** Accomack County appropriates funds annually to the Company with a large portion of that designated for the rescue squad. Additional financial support is provided through private donations and fundraising events. The Department maintains ownership of a herd of approximately 150 wild ponies, rounded up each year for its Pony Swim and Auction. An annual fundraising event is held at the end of the Fireman's Carnival in July.

The Insurance Services Office (ISO) of Virginia classifies water distribution and fire suppression capabilities on a scale of "1" to "10," 10 being "no" or "minimal" protection. Properties within the corporate limits of Chincoteague are rated "6/9" by the ISO in terms of their exposure to fire loss. This rating means that properties located 5 road miles from the fire station and within 1,000 feet of a hydrant are rated "6." Properties located within five road miles from the station and more than 1,000 feet from a hydrant are rated "9." Approximately, 95% of the Island is rated "6" and five percent of the Island is rated "9."

The 2002 Comprehensive Plan noted several improvements to the municipal water system and recommended applying for an improved ISO classification for all properties affected by the improvements. Since the 2002 Plan, the Town has made additional upgrades to its water system and the Town should apply for an improved ISO classification at the earliest opportunity.

Police Protection

The Chincoteague Police Department, the Island's primary law enforcement agency, employs eleven officers to enforce criminal and traffic laws protecting the Island's 4,000 residents and over 1 million annual visitors. The Department employs 10 full time officers ~~of which include~~including one seasonal bicycle officer, and four Department of Criminal Justice Services Instructors, and ~~a~~ RADAR Instructor and Firearms Instructor. The Town's law enforcement efforts are assisted by Accomack County's provision of jail facilities, as well as by the activities of the County's Sheriff Department.

The Department has four full-time telecommunications positions, augmented by four or five part-time positions. In 2013, the E-911 call center was transferred and consolidated with the Eastern Shore of Virginia 911 Center in order to improve service and efficiency for Town residents. The telecommunications department continues to provide~~s~~ service to the citizens of the Island on a 24-hour basis in its Communication Center for police dispatch, which operates the Chincoteague 911 Center and provides services to the citizens, police, fire and rescue. ~~The Communication Center, in an agreement made between the Town and the Federal Government, also provides~~and dispatch services for the United States Fish and Wildlife and the National Park Service on Assateague Island. The Department is also a member of the Hampton Roads Regional Academy of Criminal Justice in Newport News.

The ~~2002 Comprehensive Plan recommended that the~~ Chincoteague Police Department ~~pursue~~achieved professional accreditation as per the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. Standards for Law Enforcement Agencies, citing the rewards of "peer recognition, liability insurance rates reductions, and political status within the community."

~~The Town should make achieving the goal of accreditation a top priority for the Police Department.~~

Public Works

The Public Works Department manages the daily operations related to the Town's water, drainage and roads systems, mosquito control, parks, and boating facilities. Routine installations, maintenance, repairs, and replacements required by any of these systems or facilities can in most cases be accomplished utilizing Public Works employees, equipment, and funding. The department procures materials and other services through requests for quotes, bid contracts, and applications.

Water

The original water works system for the Town was constructed in 1927. In 1973, the Town added approximately 70,000 feet of additional distribution lines to the system. Of the approximately 70 miles of Town-owned and maintained water mains on the Island, 70% are located in the annexed area. In the



mid-1980's, the Town upgraded the transmission line bringing water from the mainland from an 8" pipe to a 16" pipe. The 8" line initially enabled the Town to supply water to all residents without the need for rationing during the summer tourist season. Subsequent to the installation of the 16" supply line, the older 8" supply line has had work done on it and is available for use during peak demand periods or when the 16" main is shut down for maintenance or repair.

The source of the Town's water is a series of wells on the mainland approximately 5 miles from Town. There are currently 4 deep wells and 5 shallow wells for public water supply. The Town ~~is currently making application to~~ has recently installed one additional deep well and a monitoring well to study future saltwater intrusion. Additionally, the Town has considered installing an additional 1,000,000-gallon tank or two high-rise tanks to meet demand.

The total capacity of the working wells is approximately 1.5 million gallons per day (MGD). As of mid September 1991, the one-day maximum draw was 1.45 MGD, which occurred when the Town experienced a leak in the large transmission line. The one-day maximum draw under ordinary circumstances was 1.1 MGD, which occurred during the summer of 1988.

Pumped water is chlorinated at the well site and then pumped 5 miles to the Island via either the recently installed 16" transmission line or through the older 8" transmission line. The water reaches the Town's water works, where it is filtered for iron, then enters a one million gallon ground storage tank. The iron content of the unfiltered water is still below the maximums set by the state.

From the ground storage tank, water is pumped to a 200,000 gallon elevated storage tank for distribution to the Town's ~~3,550,200~~ water customers. During the peak of the Island's tourist season the Town's storage capacity is sufficient to meet one day's demand. This is, perhaps, the one weak point in the system, the storage capacity. The Town's Planning Commission suggests that the Town review options regarding the construction of additional storage capacity for the water system.

Chincoteague is permitted by the Virginia Department of Health to withdraw up to 1.34 MGD of groundwater from its existing wells. This cap was placed due to concerns that any increase in this volume could result in the depletion of the underground water table and the intrusion of saltwater into the aquifer. Such withdrawal operations are monitored on a monthly basis by the Department of Health and the Department of Environmental Quality to ensure that groundwater sources are not being depleted. The Town can exceed its permitted withdrawal volume on an infrequent basis to meet peak water demands. The town estimates that during the tourist season the average daily population in its water service area is approximately 15,000 persons. In addition Department of Health and Department of Environmental Quality officials have stated that there have been no incidents of saltwater intrusion into the mainland aquifer serving Chincoteague as a result of the operation of the Town wells.

~~A recent groundwater study has estimated that while licenses have been issued for a total withdrawal amount of 14.9 MGD the recharge rate or water replacement of the aquifer averages only 11 MGD. Permitted withdrawals are more than three times the current withdrawal rates.~~

In terms of the interests of the residents of the annexed area, it should be noted that their incorporation into the Town had the effect of reducing their cost for water service. Further, during annexation proceedings the Town indicated its desire to improve and extend its water distribution system in the area proposed for annexation by installing an additional 8,300 feet of water main and 16 fire hydrants.

It should be pointed out that the water pressure in the system is sufficient to meet nationally recognized standards for municipal water service.

Sewage Disposal

Presently there is no central sewerage collection and treatment system serving the Island. Wastewater on Chincoteague is disposed of primarily by discharge directly into seepage pits, cesspools, or by the use of holding tanks or septic tanks and drain fields. The maintenance of these individually owned sewerage systems on the Island, is provided by the periodic pumping of facilities by private firms. Recently a few packaged sewerage systems have been installed by residents of the Island and are in use.

Sewerage disposal is probably the most controversial subject on the Island. At the one extreme are those who feel that there are no sewerage problems on the Island. On the other extreme are those who believe that every cesspool and septic system on the Island has either failed or is about to fail. In addition, different state and federal agencies have confused the issue by referencing the "sewerage problems" on Chincoteague in numerous reports and documents, without apparent substantial supporting evidence. For example the state Department of Health, Division of Shellfish Sanitation has "restricted" approximately 30% of the waters surrounding Chincoteague (mostly on the west side of the Island) because the "potential for contaminating" shellfish growing areas is present. Whether the potential pollution is fossil (fuel, as many suspect) or fecal is not spelled out.

~~The closure term itself (restricted) causes concern until one discovers that with proper permits and procedures, shellfish in most of these areas can be removed and sold. In defense of the Division of Shellfish Sanitation, they are currently trying to get more definitive language approved by the State. It also should be noted that those shellfish beds currently being utilized in surrounding waters have, to the best of knowledge, never been closed by any State or Federal agency. In fact, the Division of Shellfish Sanitation has categorically stated that "the water quality is excellent" in those areas.~~

~~Recent opportunities to encourage private investment in wastewater treatment infrastructure that would benefit the entire Town have been presented. In order to address these issues, the Town Council participated with Accomack County in the preparation of a grant funded regional wastewater study in 2011, and appointed five (5)~~

representatives to a Town Wastewater Advisory Committee with the several goals to be completed by June 2013.

Wastewater Advisory Committee members unanimously agree that small steps should be taken to implement a plan for public wastewater utility service on Chincoteague Island. In addition, the solution should be expandable, should allow for private investment to meet interim needs and should not try to replace adequate State programs and responsibilities.

Drainage

Often storm water must wait for lower tides to flow from the drainage ditches on the Island into the surrounding waters. Much work has been accomplished in improving the drainage situation for Chincoteague, however, the following recommendations still apply:

- New development should not encroach on existing ditches needed for drainage. Rather, such development should enhance existing drainage facilities.
- Where feasible, open ditches are favored over underground pipes. Initial costs and maintenance costs are lower. Well-maintained ditches may help low-lying soils to drain better.
- As mentioned before, an ordinance should be written and adopted to control the filling in of remaining drainage channels.

Flood Insurance

Chincoteague participates in the Community Rating System (CRS) of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's National Flood Insurance Program. The Flood Insurance Program provides participants a way to protect ~~ion~~ against catastrophic damage of loss from flooding. Communities participate in the Program by adopting and enforcing local ordinances that reduce future flood losses by regulating new construction. These measures include the adoption of floodplain zoning provisions, designed to limit damage to structures in flood hazard areas. Measures also include the adoption of special building codes for affected areas. Homeowners, renters, and business owners living in communities that participate in the Program are eligible for federally backed flood insurance.

The Community Rating System rewards communities that voluntarily take steps beyond the minimum requirements of the Flood Insurance Program with discounts on flood insurance premiums. Eligible activities fall under one or more of the following categories: flood preparedness; flood damage reduction; mapping and regulations; and public awareness.

In 2003, Chincoteague improved its rating to Class 8, entitling the community to a 10% discount on flood insurance premiums. Chincoteague's 2006 rating is Class 8. The NFIP adopted a new manual for the CRS program in 2013 which will require Chincoteague to amend its flood plain management program in order to maintain or improve the flood insurance discount available to Town property owners.

The Mayor and Town Council should take the necessary actions to maintain or improve the Town's CRS rating.



Harbor

The Curtis Merritt Harbor of Refuge offers boat launching facilities and 25', 30', 40', and 50' slips for an annual lease fee. The Harbor is used by local and off-Island boaters for both working and recreational craft.

There is currently a waiting list for annually leased slips, indicating the need to create more slips to accommodate the number of boaters who want to keep their boats at the facility.

The Harbor Committee has an aggressive plan to set aside \$0.55 of every dollar collected as slip rent for the long term replacement of the facility with a long term replacement goal of one million dollars. A recent opinion from a Certified Public Accountant stated that such a facility should be depreciated over a 20-year period at which time the replacement fund should be adequate to rebuild the Harbor. Such a depreciation timetable would require the Committee set aside of \$50,000 per year for twenty years to meet the one million dollar goal.

The best-case appraisal of a 20-year lifetime for the original harbor is currently under discussion. It has been pointed out by Harbor Committee members that both sides of the bulkheads at the facility now have worms.

There also have been a growing number of voices raised, which point out that the Harbor has the opportunity and the obligation to take corrective financial actions now. In addition, the Harbor Committee should not expect taxpayers to replace the harbor at the end of its current lifetime.

The Town Council believes that both the expected 20-year life of the facility and one million projected replacement costs are unrealistic, and has encouraged the Harbor

Committee to review their current financial health and make some tough, drastic changes. It would be very unfortunate if the Island were to lose the Harbor.

Health Care

A community health center which is part of the Eastern Shore Rural Health System, and a medical center affiliated with Peninsula Regional Medical Center currently provide primary health care to Town residents. The Chincoteague Community Health Center, located on Main Street, is operated by the Eastern Shore Rural Health System, which is a non-profit community and migrant health center organization. The Center offers full laboratory services, immunization services for children and adults, preventive health education, outreach services, case management, and other health counseling. While the Center provides health care to people of all ages, it specializes in adult and geriatric primary care and preventative services. Island Family Medical which is owned by PRMC is a nonprofit health care facility which provides well checkups, x-ray capabilities, and some lab work.

Public health services for Chincoteague residents also are available through the Accomack County Department of Health, located in the Town of Accomac. Services are provided free or on a sliding fee scale, and include programs on family planning and support, immunization, communicable diseases, Women, Infants and Children, and maternity clinics.

[Riverside Shore Memorial Hospital began construction of a new 78 bed hospital in 2013 to serve residents of the Eastern Shore of Virginia. Its new location in Accomack County \(Town of Onley\) will be closer to Chincoteague.](#)

The Town should consider an active program to recruit, support, and retain physicians.

Recreation Facilities

Boat Landings

Town residents can find access to many marshes, beaches, bays and the ocean through a number of public boat landings. The Town maintains ramps for launching boats at the Town Dock, Fir Landing, Eastside, Curtis Merritt Harbor of Refuge, and Chincoteague Veterans Memorial Park. The Town Dock is located on Main Street across from the firehouse behind the American legion building. The Eastside Boat Ramp is located on Eastside Road, and Fir Landing is located on Fir Landing Road off of Deep Hole Road.

Robert N. Reed Downtown Waterfront Park

The Town's new waterfront park, the Robert N. Reed Downtown Waterfront Park, located on Main Street near the Chincoteague Channel, offers a waterfront venue for residents to enjoy



picnicking, recreation, and beautiful views of the water. In addition to recreational opportunities, the park will serve as a site for community festivals and events such as the “~~Weekend of the Islands~~ Mother Earth Day” and the “Chili Chowder Cook-off” and other arts & cultural events which have already begun drawing as many as 1,500 visitors annually. The park currently has 10 boat slips available for rent to transient boats 26’ to 50’ in length; additional slips and a fishing pier are planned.

The Town recently purchased an expansion parcel that connects existing park improvements along the waterfront to Bridge Street. Through the support of a grant from the Virginia Saltwater Fishing Fund, the old bridge fender at the end of Bridge Street will be constructed as a 150 foot long fishing pier in 2014.

Revitalization of Main Street with new sidewalks and street furnishings will be completed by 2015 from Cropper Street to Church Street through the downtown business district.

Chincoteague Veteran’s Memorial Park

Chincoteague Veteran's Memorial Park, another waterfront park, is located on Eastside Road. Park facilities include tennis courts, basketball courts, playground equipment, a fishing-crabbing pier, ball field, boat ramp, skate park, pavilion and restrooms. New playground equipment was installed in the Park in 2002 through volunteer efforts and donations. In 2014, the Recreation and Community Enhancement Committee initiated a playground improvement project that will replace existing play structures as needed and possibly add a ‘rocket theme’ element to coordinate with new tourism opportunities at Wallops Island spaceport. The Park pavilion may be reserved for group events through a permit issued by the Town. The Town of Chincoteague purchases a fishing license from the Commonwealth of Virginia for the Park’s fishing pier, so an individual license is not required.

Donald J. Leonard Park

This park located across from the Chincoteague Combined School was created in 2009. Over one acre of waterfront land has been left in its natural state for the enjoyment of the citizens and visitors alike. Improvements in 2012 included additional picnic tables, entrance signage and landscaping, and water service for irrigation.

Island Nature Trail

The Island Nature Trail is a .7 mile long loop off of Hallie Whealton Smith Drive. It is an accessible path complete with benches, and trash cans. Phase II of the Island Nature Trail ~~is in the process of being~~ was completed as a natural surface trail and will add significant length to the current trail system. The trail is located on land that was purchased by the Town from Accomack County School Board to help fund the remodeling and expansion of the Chincoteague Combined School. Repaving of the accessible trail loop will be

completed in 2014 to repair weather damage and improve the durability of the pavement section.

Mariners Point

The southern tip of Chincoteague Island, with views to the Inlet and Wallops Island rocket launches, was identified as one of the most beautiful places in Town by the Recreation and Community Enhancement Committee. Public Works staff successfully converted a municipal operations facility into a level viewing area and passive park. The addition of a Watermen's Memorial in 2013 is part of an ongoing partnership with community organizations to make this one of Chincoteague's finest parks.

The Chincoteague Recreation Convention Center

The Chincoteague Recreation/Convention Center Authority completed the construction of a recreation and convention center in 1996. Local schools and agencies have used this 9,000 square foot structure for graduations and special events, and the facility meets the needs of most of the Island's civic and volunteer organizations.

Monies raised to build the Center came from County and Town transient occupancy taxes. The 2002 Comprehensive Plan proposed that future operating costs which may exceed revenues be distributed to the Center from the same Town transient taxes, which could result in a facility that would operated at no expense to the residents of Chincoteague.

~~The 2002 Comprehensive Plan also made reference to the Center Authority's plan to raise funds for construction of a community pool at the Center. If this type of expansion is not feasible, the Town would willingly support the addition of a YMCA to the Island to accommodate the recreational needs not currently being fulfilled by the Recreation/Convention Center.~~

Other Possible Facilities

The Town should pursue the possibility of turning other public lands into recreational areas such as the ~~Lekites vacant~~ property located on Lekites Drive, ~~for a walking trail or the Curtis Merritt Harbor of Refuge property on the south end of the Island for a fishing recreation pier.~~ It is noted that the local little league origination ~~has~~ leased the school property behind the Community Center ~~to construct two~~ and constructed three little league fields.

Museums

~~Heritage resources located within Chincoteague also serve the recreational needs of the community. These include two museums, the Oyster and Maritime Museum and the Refuge Waterfowl Museum. The Oyster and Maritime Museum, a non-profit educational institution, is located on Maddox Boulevard just before the entrance to the Chincoteague~~

National Wildlife Refuge. Founded in 1965 by a group of Island women, the museum opened in 1972 and was recently expanded in 1996. The museum tells the story of Island history and of the oystering and seafood business which was the major industry of the Island.

The Refuge Waterfowl Museum is located on Maddox Boulevard and features over 8,000 square feet of Atlantic flyway waterfowling history. Exhibits include antique boats, guns, traps, art and decoys by various craftsmen. An extensive collection of the resident carver Delbert "Cigar" Daisy's work can be seen throughout the museum. Additional exhibits include a restored hunting buggy, a carver's shop replica and a new wing opened in May of 2002 which features a realistic 'by the seashore experience' for visitors.

Implementation Strategies

Police Protection

- Pursue professional accreditation for the Chincoteague Police Department as per the Virginia Law Enforcement Accreditation

Fire & Emergency Services

- Apply for an improved "ISO" classification for the Town from the Virginia Insurance Services Office.
- NIMS Certified

Sewerage

- Continue studying the feasibility of developing public sewer collection and treatment facilities. Identify a potential Maddox Boulevard Corridor wastewater treatment service area and prepare the next phase of engineering studies, permit applications, and grant requests to determine its feasibility for operation as a publicly owned wastewater treatment facility similar to the private Sunset Bay Utilities facility.
- Regularly review and refine zoning ordinance and development standards for areas within new sewer service areas.
- Continue to encourage individual wastewater treatment systems that are properly maintained to meet current State regulations.
- Encourage Virginia Department of Health (VDH) to permit, inventory, inspect, and improve private maintenance and repair of the Island's individual wastewater systems (cesspools, drainfields, etc.). VDH will continue to enforce violations identified by the Division of Shellfish Sanitation. Request VDH to expand its computerized reporting system to include public access to mapping, inspection and repair reports so that improvements can be documented.

- Encourage private (and USCG) wastewater treatment permit holders to provide service by voluntary connection within the Main Street Corridor small service area between Maddox Boulevard and Bunting Road.
- Actively participate with Virginia State Agencies, Accomack County, and the Maryland Coastal Bays Program to revise the Comprehensive Conservation & Management Plan (CCMP) for monitoring and improving water quality in Chincoteague Bay, and will seek to continue working on a long range plan that reduces nutrient loads from septic drainfields to the surrounding waters of Chincoteague Island on a voluntary basis.

Drainage

- Limit the encroachment of new development on existing ditches, which are critical for drainage.
- Enhance existing drainage facilities.
- Favor open ditches over underground pipes where feasible because the initial costs and maintenance costs over time are lower.
- Enforce a municipal ordinance to control the filling of remaining drainage channels.

Flood Insurance

- Improve the Town's rating status under the Community Rating System (CRS) of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's National Flood Insurance Program to lower community-wide insurance rates.

Harbor

- Ensure the harbor remains as an economically valuable Island asset.
- Encourage the Harbor Committee to review current financial health and make necessary adjustments to ensure that future costs are not born by Island taxpayers.

Recreation

- Pursue the possibility of turning acquiring or improving other public lands into recreational areas ~~such as the Lekites property located on Lekites Drive for a walking trail or the Curtis Merritt Harbor of Refuge property on the south end of the Island for a fishing recreation pier.~~

Assessment for Approx. 21 miles of private roads:

1.) Locate all private roads starting with southern end of Island:

Island being 6 miles long; break down to 2-2-2 each

2.) Determine length and width of each road.

3.) Estimated cost and Maintenance by Public Works Dept.

4.) Semi-annual grading; annual fill dirt, shells, stones, etc.. (as needed)

5.) Determine ownership of each road:

One individual or Home Owners Association/ based on number of lots in subdivision.

6.) Check with private subdivisions to determine if a road management agreement is already in place; but not being enforced.

- Should TOWN take on any of these costs?