



BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION ON ADDRESSING PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY'S STRUCTURAL DEFICIT

JULY 18, 2016
MINUTES

The following Blue Ribbon Commission members were present at 11:13 a.m.

Blue Ribbon Commission Members:

Earl Adams, Jr.
Henry Mosley
David Harrington
Amber Hendricks
James R. Estepp
Desiree Callender
Gino Renne

Jamal Miller
John Rogard Tabori
David Van Dyke
Sherman Ragland
Ron Watson
Terri Bacote-Charles
Turkessa Green

Council Members and Staff:

Council Member Deni Taveras
Colette R. Gresham
Maurice Simpson, Jr.

Howard W. Stone
Karen Campbell

Other Attendees:

Dwayne Mingo
Woody Woodruff

Jeana Jacobs

OPENING REMARKS/REVIEW OF MINUTES:

Chair Earl Adams, Jr. called the meeting to order at 11:13 a.m. The Commission reviewed and approved the minutes from the June 13th meeting. The Chair welcomed everyone and stated that for today's meeting we will hear from representatives from the building/land use, labor, and small business industries in an effort to get their perspective on doing business in the County. After the presentations, there will be discussion on the final report outline and focusing on recommendations.

PRESENTATIONS (BUILDING INDUSTRY, LEGAL COMMUNITY – LAND USE, BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND LABOR):

The Commission heard presentations from building industry representatives – Ken Dunn and Gary Michael; legal community (land use) representative – Tom Haller, Esq.; business community representatives - Brunson Cooper and Larry Spriggs; and labor representatives - Bruce Lerner, Esq. and Rhonda White-Yakoub. The building/land use and small business presenters concurred that a majority of the development projects in the County encounter the following three issues: 1) the Adequate Public

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Facilities (APF) test pertaining to traffic, schools, parks, and community wide infrastructure; 2) the length of time it takes to get through the process, i.e. the County's land development permit approval process; and 3) third party reviewers and permit fees. The Commissioners asked what would be considered a reasonable timeframe to complete a development project for design and review and the consensus is that the process should not take longer than it does to build the project which would be around one year. It was recommended that the County needs to reduce inefficiencies caused by double oversight review in the entitlement process; continue and support the County's Zoning Ordinance rewrite facilitated by Park and Planning; identify creative strategies to advance benefits from APF fees; better educate and provide more certainty in the County's programs that assist County-based businesses; and consider revising the MBE program to include local components. Mr. Haller recommended that there should also be a transition period from the old zoning process to the new process once the County's Zoning Ordinance is revised as well as flexibility in regard to fees associated with the schools and public safety surcharge. Another suggestion was made to have the County take a comprehensive look at office parks that are vacate and repurpose the office parks to build revenue due to the strong market for industrial land as well as increase the price for industrial land.

The labor presenters stated that it is false that the County has more expensive labor agreements than other jurisdictions and that there is a perception personnel is expensive. The statistics show that wages have gone down and actual take home pay has gone down over the years. There needs to be incentives to encourage employees to live in the County versus a requirement which can have legal implications. It was also recommended that there needs to be review of the County's formal and informal policies.

Discussion of the final report outline and recommendations was deferred by the Chair to the next meeting. The Commissioners decided to meet within two weeks for an extended work session on the final report outline.

Meeting adjourned - 1:51 p.m.

Next Meeting – Tuesday, August 2nd at 10 a.m. at the Prince George's County Chamber of Commerce, 4640 Forbes Boulevard, Suite 130, Lanham, Maryland 20706