

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
STAFFORD, VIRGINIA
MINUTES
Downtown Stafford Work Session
June 8, 2023

CALL TO ORDER – A Downtown Stafford work session of the Stafford County Board of Supervisors was called to order by Dr. Pamela Yeung, Chairman, at 3:00 p.m. on Thursday, June 8, 2023, in the Activities room, at the Public Safety Building, 1225 Courthouse Road, Stafford, VA.

ROLL CALL – The following members were present: Dr. Pamela Yeung Chairman; Vice Chairman Thomas C. Coen; Tinesha O. Allen (*arrived at 3:02 p.m.*); Meg Bohmke; Darrell E. English; Monica L. Gary; and Crystal L. Vanuch.

Also in attendance were Randal E. Vosburg, County Administrator; Donna Krauss, Deputy County Administrator, Mike Morris, Deputy County Administrator, Rysheda McClendon, County Attorney; Andrew Spence, Chief Director of Information Services, Cheryl Giles, Deputy Clerk, various staff members; and other interested parties.

Dr. Yeung stated that she would turn the meeting over to Mr. Vosburg for a presentation.

Mr. Vosburg welcomed everyone to the meeting, stated the purpose of the meeting and provided an overview of the agenda. He said that they would start with a Destination Stafford video presentation.

After the video presentation, Mr. Vosburg thanked Andrew Spence and his team for putting the video together.

Mr. Vosburg stated that the Board had questions at the retreat about retail leakage, projected revenue from the different uses, and development numbers of residential units within a one-mile and three-mile radius. He noted that there were additional handouts in the agenda packet for key information that the Board discussed at the retreat.

Mr. Vosburg stated that documents about the following information were also included in the agenda packet:

- School Generation Overview
- Traffic Generation
- Community Survey Review
- Tax Revenue Projections

- UD-5 Uses
- Surrounding Development

Mr. Vosburg stated that the video showed information dating back to 2006. He said we're approaching 20 years of discussions on the Downtown Stafford topic and there's a consensus to do something. He said we can get closer to a consensus and ultimately put something out to the development community that says, here's a piece of property that we own and this is what we would like to see here. He said we could then see what the market proposals are. Mr. Vosburg noted that several unsolicited offers have been received from the development community that haven't really hit the market where the Board wanted to be. He said an opposite approach is being taken to see where the Board wants to be and put that out to the development community so that they can produce a plan that the Board would be happy with. He stated that the plans submitted by the developers could be tweaked because ultimately the Board owns the property.

Mr. Spence led the Board in a Slido survey poll activity. He stated that this was an opportunity to rank the four uses that were seen in the Destination Stafford video. He said that this was a way to get a temperature of where the Board was on certain aspects and to dial in on the preferences of the Board. He said the recommendations would be used to provide insight and to solicit an REFI (Request for Expressions Interest).

Mr. Spence presented the results from the poll and requested the Board's feedback on the following Destination Stafford uses:

	<u>Uses</u>	<u>Ranking</u>
A.	Tourism/Cultural	
1.	Restaurants/Retail	3.86
2.	Outdoor Gathering/Event Space	3.71
3.	Museum	3.43
4.	Fieldhouse	3.43
5.	Hotel/Conference Space	3.43
6.	Performing Arts	2.71
B.	Commercial/Recreation	
1.	Live Entertainment	3.14
2.	Restaurants	2.57
3.	Amusement Space	2.29
4.	Theater	2.00
C.	Government	
1.	Courthouse	2.29
2.	Restaurants	2.00
3.	Commercial Office Space	1.71
D.	Destination Stafford	

1.	Tourism/Cultural	3.14
2.	Commercial Use	2.71
3.	Mixed Use Residential/Commercial	2.29
4.	Government Use	1.86
E. Residential Units Support		
1.	0 units	14%
2.	200 units	14%
3.	400 units	14%
4.	600 units	57%

Ms. Vanuch asked if the density for residential dwelling units was multiplied by 10,000. She said that no developer had said that it was viable to build Downtown Stafford without 5,000 residential dwelling units. She remarked that the numbers were not realistic.

Mr. Vosburg responded that part of the process is to put it out to the development community to find out their interests in density numbers.

Ms. Gary commented that she did not know how the numbers had changed from the recent original numbers with the one-mile and three-mile radius.

Mr. Vosburg noted that the numbers were located in the agenda packet in the document behind the first tab.

Ms. Bohmke stated that she didn't think this information had any relevance. She said that everything we're doing is going to be based on residential units. She said she would like to see what other developments like this that have been built throughout the United States. She said she would like to know how many residential units those developments had, as well as what their retail and commercial look like, pre-COVID and post-COVID. Ms. Bohmke also expressed a desire to know how this is financially viable right now. She said this information has no relevance to anything because it's not connected to any additional information.

Mr. Vosburg responded that other supervisors requested this information. He said he thinks the reason they asked for this information was because they saw the proposed numbers in the Stantec report. He said there was a desire by some supervisors to go below the walkable distance number. He said the thought process was that you don't necessarily have to have residential in the development to support the development. He said the question that was asked was how much residential do we have in close proximity that could support the commercial uses, the office uses, or the restaurant uses in that development. He said close proximity was left open to the definition of one-, three-, and five-mile radiuses. He said staff didn't feel that there were a lot of logical connections to the five-mile radius. He said staff felt that the one mile and the three miles had a good connection to the downtown area. He said staff looked at what residential was within those

two points that would be supportive of the downtown area. He said the genesis is that if we don't put residential there, how much residential do we have in the general area that would support it and would drive or potentially walk to a downtown Stafford. Mr. Vosburg said in his opinion, there is some relevance because if they're driving to the closest retail, we could have an option that was drivable in close proximity that could serve as supporting a downtown.

Ms. Bohmke remarked that she appreciated what Mr. Vosburg said and inquired how this picture compares to other successful developments throughout the nation.

Ms. Allen commented that she could speak to the Mosaic development because she frequents it when she goes to Fairfax Tysons Corner area. She said it has its own little community. She said there is residential and a little bit of schooling in terms of private daycare to augment the residents. She said there is also shopping, like grocery stores, restaurants, and everything. Ms. Allen stated that she had not seen significant changes, pre-pandemic or post-pandemic, in restaurants in terms of switching out the restaurants or retailers.

Ms. Bohmke thanked Ms. Allen for the information and said she would like to see the data on this because that information is tangible.

Mr. Vosburg stated that with regards to data, part of Stantec's job was data driven. He said that the data that they gathered said we would need 1000 dwelling units within a quarter mile. He said the market data that we've been given for all the proposals has shown much higher densities. He said the true data would show that you need much higher densities in your core. Mr. Vosburg said that staff didn't pick up that the Board wanted to go into the thousands of units. He said staff took an attempt to try and justify a lower density. He said the true data would be what Stantec came up with and what the market proposals are coming in with that they believe is needed to support their projects. The watered down data that staff felt like the Board was heading towards, is trying to help that fit and make something work to see if the development community responds to it. He said this was the closest staff could get to supporting something less than what Stantec and the other market data shows.

Mr. Spence stated that every development is unique depending on time, autonomy and the transition of the area. He said when we visited the Kent Lands in Maryland, they have development for a lot of single family homes, some three-row condos and apartments. He said it was very dated and instead of building onto that, they built next to it, to expand it. Mr. Spence said when you look at Loudoun or at Mosaic, they are fresh, new, vibrant, and successful. He said when looking at downtowns like Old Town Alexandria or Old Town Manassas, they are having a resurgence. He said they are bringing in new businesses and new aspects. Mr. Spence stated that he was not sure if one can find data that gives you a clear answer to Ms. Bohmke's question. He said it is very unique and is based on time, the surroundings, residents, median income, and those

kinds of aspects. He said Stafford is a very prime market for that development because of the positive economic factors that Stafford can bring to a development.

Mr. Spence resumed highlighting the poll results. He stated there was an even distribution for each item. He said outdoor space was a top focus.

Ms. Vanuch inquired if the outdoor space poll could be redone because it wasn't clear that outdoor space included amusement spaces like a bowling alley, an arcade, etc.

Dr. Yeung asked if the item selections under poll #1 and #2 could be more clearly defined.

Dr. Yeung remarked that when looking at the individual items, she thinks about the following questions when talking about Destination Stafford like: where are we going; where would people continue to come; and what are they coming for. She said if we put in a hotel conference space, there needs to be a reason why they're holding conferences here. She said if you have a museum, or arts and performance and things of that nature, that goes along with hotel, and restaurant retail, so you're giving them something to come to. She said that when you say outdoor gathering event space, we just need to make sure we know what kind of events we're trying to attract. She said there needs to be a combination of things that make sense when it comes to tourism and cultural theatres and amusement. She said that we know hotels are going to bring money, but there needs to be something else that will bring them to those hotels. She said there needs to be a combination of things that will bring the revenue and keep it here.

Ms. Vanuch stated that one of her qualms with Downtown Stafford is that we have Embrey Mill. She said Embrey Mill has been very successful and the Board can't name some of the things that were discussed in closed session that are going to be coming there. She said that we would be taking away some of the things they would want in the Downtown Stafford area. She said she knows there is a lot more coming down the pike for Embrey Mill and inquired if that would compete with Downtown Stafford.

Ms. Kathy Baker responded to Dr. Yeung's question about defining live entertainment. She said that the definition for live entertainment came from the list of uses. She said it states that "live entertainment means provided in person, including but not limited to musical performances, music playback, disc jockeys, public speaking and dramatic performances."

Ms. Allen commented that she respectively disagreed with Ms. Vanuch. She said that what Embrey Mill is going to offer isn't going to be the same things that our residents are asking about in Downtown. She said they're not bringing fine dining to Embrey Mill. She said we can have different economic hubs exist within the radius of each other, they're not mutually exclusive, and they're not going to be competing in terms of revenue. She said they're just going to be different people along the economic spectrum within Stafford County and it would be reflective of that.

She said having variety and option is the way to go versus saying Embrey Mill is going to take away from something.

Ms. Allen stated that she recognized that with the one-mile and the three-mile radius, the Board needs to be cognizant that if we don't want to have residential units within the quarter mile, the half mile, or the one mile radius to meet the requirements of what the development community is asking for, then as a Board, we need to start being more proactive in going after funding like TAP and building out our sidewalks and land to allow more walkability. She said within this area, we don't have walkability. She said if we want to limit residential, then we need to spend the money on transportation to allow people that don't live within the quarter mile and less to be able to walk. She said we don't have that right because we're not putting money into that infrastructure.

Mr. Vosburg stated that the purpose of this work session was to have dialogue. He said staff has received great feedback to talk through the different uses that are proposed. He said we're trying to manipulate the market a little bit because the market has provided unsolicited proposals. He said the consultant has shown us that this is what would drive the market and it is not what we desire to do. He said we're trying to manipulate away from that. He said we are trying to see what that looks like and what we want that to look like. He said there is a danger with that because we don't want commercial to then thrive and where downtown businesses are closing. He said anytime we're changing what the market is saying, there is a risk. We have to be able to address that potential risk as well as be aware of it as we step into it.

Discussion ensued about clarifying outdoor and amusement spaces categories.

Ms. Bohmke commented that the categories are all based on whatever our lenses are. She said each person has a different lens on how they view an amusement space.

Ms. Gary remarked that she agreed with Ms. Bohmke's comment. She said we do have different lenses, whether it's our age, economic status, etc.

Ms. Allen commented that we are losing \$1.3 billion in retail leakage. She said capturing even 10% of that retail leakage could be used to develop the county's infrastructure instead of continuously putting stress on residential. She said until we develop a viable economic output, we're going to be continuously relying on residential properties to bear the brunt of the taxes. She said that Stafford has nothing to offer the kids and we should start thinking about how we can cater to the young families that are moving to Stafford.

Dr. Yeung commented that we should build on what we already have in the county. If individuals are staying in hotels, what are they going to do? She said if we decide to put a museum, performing arts, live entertainment, and amusement space, we should have something that would draw not only individuals when they come to the hotels here, but even for the families that are already here.

Supervisor Bohmke said that she respectfully disagrees with Supervisor Allen's comments. She said that Stafford County is a phenomenal place to raise a family. She said there is hiking, all kinds of sports at the Rouse Center, a skating rink, dog parks, frisbee golf at Curtis Park, and walking trails. She said we don't have a downtown, but Stafford offers a tremendous amount to our community and it's a great place to live.

Supervisor Gary commented that for her, this keeps coming back to a financial decision. She said that the \$1.3 billion retail gap is a huge issue and should concern each Board member. She said the issues the Board has had to navigate with the budget has put pressure on the Board, the schools, and the community paying their own taxes. She said she wouldn't say that there is nothing to do in Stafford, but the kids may feel that way sometimes. She said there are not a lot of places to go now. She said the reality is that the community is spending the money and they are spending it elsewhere.

Supervisor English commented that if we are going to do something, we should capitalize on what we already have such as the George Washington's boyhood home. He said Stafford has a lot of history that we could capitalize on.

Dr. Yeung commented that she is interested in the museum because there is a lot of history in Stafford County. She asked Mr. Scott Mayausky if he could provide insight and information on the vision of the Stafford Museum.

Mr. Mayausky responded that the vision of the museum has always been like the hub of a wheel. He said there is so much history in Stafford County that we can't tell it all within a museum and you don't have to. He said we have Ferry Farm, Chatham and Government Island. He said they want the museum to be representative for people to come to Stafford. He said the museum wants to find out what people are interested in and then let them know that whatever they are interested in, it exists in Stafford County. He said then they could direct them to that resource.

Ms. Allen clarified that she did not say Stafford did not have things to do. She said she stated it was what a 12-year-old said. She said Ms. Bohmke listed outdoor things to do. She said not everyone wants to do outdoor things. She asked what the alternative is that we can offer people. She said even if people spend a day at a museum or at Ferry Farm, there is not a nice restaurant where they could go to have a nice meal. She said there is no variety of food or culture. She said this is how we end up having the retail leakage because everything has connectivity to it.

Ms. Vanuch remarked that she felt the conversation was veering off from the real intent of the purpose of the work session. She said when she listens to constituents, it sounds like they desire more restaurant choices and things to do. She said the sticking point for a lot of people is the residential development units because it's going to drive traffic, having more people here, and

having more kids in schools. She said she understands that Mr. Vosburg is trying to bring some type of plan to put out to developers to see what they would build from the commercial side. She said she thinks people want restaurants and things to do such as live entertainment, and a gathering space where the community could come together. She said she did not think the Board had done a good job at minimizing the residential component and still incentivizing businesses to come to Stafford. She said we haven't considered how to do tax overlay zones or giving a developer personal and real estate property tax exemptions or reductions over 10 or 20 years so that they could create low income rent. She said we need to come up with a way to drive those businesses here. She said the Board should be coming up with other outside-the-box solutions. She said she wants more things to do but does not want it at the cost of residential development because it costs the taxpayers.

Mr. Coen remarked that when the Board met with the Economic Development Authority (EDA) they discussed getting more restaurants. He said they were told that they would need more rooftops. He said that a downtown that has hotels and that has dining for the people is a tourism aspect. He said that was his concern about the rooftop aspect. He said if we aim for tourism, then an amusement space or live entertainment is rational and sensible and should be what we focus on. He said he agrees with the concern about the impact of thousands of homes in this area where we already are challenged with infrastructure for our schools. He said it is not a prudent thing to do. He said sports tourism is doing well and if we tie the other things into tourism like a museum and the hotels, it would be a very prudent pathway moving forward.

Ms. Gary commented that she is amicable to having more housing, but only what is needed. She said she was glad that staff provided the information about additional housing coming in at different radiuses. She said even if the Board doesn't change the zoning, she thought setting some sort of a cap would give a cohesive vision to the developers.

Ms. Allen remarked that she liked Ms. Vanuch's idea about doing some type of overlay if we don't have the density. She said since there is not a consensus with the Board on what the residential numbers need to be, maybe Mr. Vosburg could put it to the developers to combine the limited residential numbers the Board is willing to do with an overlay to make up for the lack of units and offer incentives to bridge the gap between what the Board is asking for and what the data says in terms of units.

Dr. Yeung commented that if the developers are telling us that they need a certain number of apartments, condos, or townhomes and the Board does not give them those options, they are not going to come here because they will not be successful. She asked if we give the developers the incentives to come, how do they stay. She asked how they are going to profit if there is nobody around within the radius that we are talking about. She said there is nothing to keep the businesses here if the people that drive up and down I-95 don't stop here. She said that the goal of having

people live around here, is that they will support those commercial establishments, restaurants, or live entertainment when nobody else stops here to support it.

Ms. Bohmke stated that she thought everybody had great comments and that the conversation was very productive. Ms. Bohmke then shared about a new program being implemented by Stafford County Parks and Recreation to bring field hockey for the younger kids in Stafford County. She stated we should build a field house and a pickle ball facility.

Mr. English remarked that a field house or rec center with a lot of restaurants and hotels around it and an open space for live entertainment would be a good draw. He said then we would not need to add more housing. He said he agreed with Ms. Bohmke that if we brought in a major field house, it would support itself.

Ms. Gary remarked she agreed with that as well. She stated that we should look at the needs for our Parks and Rec and find out what the priorities are for recreation.

Ms. Allen remarked that it's great to say what we want, but if the development community does not want that because we are not satisfying what they have asked for, then we're not going to get what we want. She said that she recommends the Board direct Mr. Vosburg and his staff to put some type of residential and overlay together to present to the developers.

Mr. Coen commented there was Targeted Growth Area (TGA) around Brooke train station, which was put in with the theory that we could put in high density by the train station. He said nobody ever came forward with the plan so it was taken out of the comp plan. He said the fact that this is in the comp plan never means it will happen unless somebody comes forward with something that's meaningful. He said staff should go back and look at the comments from the citizen meetings to see what the public said they would like to see come here.

Dr. Yeung remarked she would turn the work session back over to Mr. Vosburg to present closing remarks.

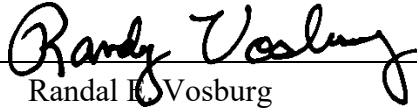
Mr. Vosburg said the next steps would be to get a Request for Expressions Interest (RFEI). He said the Slido survey will help to show where there is a consensus. He stated that he suggests staff take the data from this discussion and put together a draft of what would be put out to the development community. He said then we could bring a draft and formalize that consensus and put it to a vote to see what we can put out at a meeting in the near future, preferably after the summer recess.

Ms. Bohmke commented that she is passionate about pickle ball. She explained how the process works to get on onto a pickle ball court.

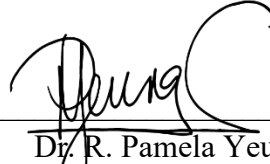
Ms. Gary requested an update on the smart community study at a later date.

Adjournment

At 4:27 p.m., Chairman Yeung adjourned the June 8, 2023 Stafford County Board of Supervisors Downtown Stafford work session.



Randal H. Vosburg
County Administrator



Dr. R. Pamela Yeung
Chairman