

Public Works Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)

August 18, 2003

Fountain Plaza

CAC Representatives

Ms. Lois Custer
Dr. Harold Cones
Ms. Kathy Dennehey
Mr. Arthur Keyes
Ms. Sharyn Fox
Ms. Sharron Kitchen Miller
Mr. Gus Owens
Ms. Annistine Patrick
Ms. Artistine Reid

Public Works Representatives

Dori Brown, Solid Waste Division
Ralph Caldwell, Street Maintenance Division
Reed Fowler, Administration Division
Michelle Gilbert-Harris, Administration Division
Susan Smith Hogue, Solid Waste Division
Eric Lamberton, Administration Division
Steve Land, Wastewater Division
Tony Risk, Street Maintenance Division
Tom Ticconi, Building Service Division

Others Present

Derek Fowler

Call to Order

7:05 p.m.

Purpose of CAC

Reed Fowler began the meeting by addressing the purpose of the CAC. The CAC will help the Public Works Director understand citizen concerns better by increasing understanding of public attitudes and by providing an opportunity for dialogue about future projects. The CAC will help identify local issues of concern that may not be apparent to the Public Works Director, and they will offer him an opportunity to explain complex issues to lay people in a setting that fosters openness. This partnership between Public Works and the community will build trust and goodwill resulting in improved planning, decision-making and program development.

Mission Statement

Staff distributed an example mission statement for CAC review/discussion/adoption at the next meeting. The CAC mission statement should reflect committee purpose and augment the Public Works mission statement.

Chairperson Pro tem

A motion passed to elect Sharyn Fox as Chairperson pro tem for a six-month timeframe. By selecting a Chairperson pro tem, members can become acquainted and select a qualified chairperson at a later date.

CAC Term Limits

Through random selection, the following terms were assigned:

1-year term: Ms. Miller, Ms. Patrick, Ms. Custer

2-year term: Ms. Fox, Mr. Owens, Mr. Keyes

3-year term: Ms. Dennehey, Ms. Reid, Dr. Cones

Bylaws

Staff provided draft bylaws to members in their CAC binders. Suggested changes (since the initial bylaw mailing to CAC members) have been made in yellow. At the next meeting, CAC members will review/discuss/adopt bylaws. The CAC decided that subsequent CAC representative terms would be for a 2-year period following these initial appointments (this allows for stagnated terms).

Youth Representation

Staff proposed the introduction of youth representation on the CAC. After much discussion, the CAC members decided that two (2) youth representatives will serve in a voting capacity for one (1) year terms. The Office of Youth Development will be making youth representative recommendations to the Public Works Director based on the pool of applicants they received for the Mayor's Youth Commission.

Division Presentations

Each of the five Public Works Administrators gave a brief explanation of their Division activities. A detailed description of Division responsibilities was included in the CAC binders.

Administration: Includes financial services, safety and training, analysis and public relations, and information technology. Number of budgeted positions in Public Works is 330 with an annual operating budget of \$37.5 million dollars and an annual CIP value of \$15,230,000.

Building Services: Maintains 243 city owned/leased structures; responsibilities include janitorial, painters, security, plumbers, carpenters, mechanical specialists, and electricians. Staff is available 24 hours day/7 days week.

Solid Waste: Includes garbage, bulk waste, recycling, litter, composting, solid waste enforcement, and household hazardous waste collection.

Street Maintenance: Includes curb and gutter repair, leaf collection, pothole repair, reconstruction and asphalt resurfacing, snow removal, and street sweeping. A more detailed handout was distributed to elaborate on Street Maintenance responsibilities.

Wastewater: Includes maintenance and repair of wastewater and stormwater collection and conveyance/sanitary sewer systems. Wastewater spends \$3.1 million dollars annually in upgrades.

Current Public Works Issues for CAC Input

Staff explained that CAC projects will be determined by CAC member interest, unless something arises that the Public Works Director would like to have CAC input. Potential issues to advise upon include solid waste bulk collection practices, wastewater drainage ditch cleaning schedule/budget, street sweeping/parking, and residential recycling participation/diversion.

Issues of Concern of CAC members:

- Lois Custer: Review the Bulk waste and Solid Waste collection system and the stormwater drainage situation. The bulk waste call-in system aggravated participants in the pilot because they felt they paid the same fees but received less service. She personally thinks bulk waste collection is offered too much in comparison to other communities. Possibly the City could split bulk waste collection down the center of the City using the railroad tracks as the divider. Another issue of concern is how people set out bulk waste too early. The referenced stormwater flooding problems are in the Jones Creek area.
- Kathy Dennehey: Completely satisfied with City services.
- Dr. Cones: Drainage issue is a concern. Ditches in some areas are no longer deep enough to be effective resulting in standing water. Also recommends that the City increase the education outreach materials that explain City services.
- Sharyn Fox: Would like to see increase in recycling, with consideration given to a way to avoid resident need to break down cardboard boxes.
- Sharron Kitchen Miller: Need better management of leaf collection is the chief complaint of her neighbors. Would like increased efforts at promoting composting.
- Gus Owens: Has no complaints. He knows whom to call when he does need help.
- Arthur Keyes: Concerns over ditch cleaning. Satisfied with the current CIP project in his area.
- Artistine Reid: Drainage concerns on 26th/27th Streets, Victoria Blvd, Hampton Avenue and Marshall Avenue. Black trash bags are a problem downtown as is landowners who evict tenants resulting in bulk waste curbside prior to collection day.
- Annistine Patrick: Lack of communication between City departments. An example being communication lapse between Public Works and Public Utilities. Residents who are not paying their water bill are still receiving solid waste services. Staff stated that any CAC suggestions made that effect other Departments will be forwarded to them, however only Public Works can guarantee that CAC suggestions could result in changes to Public Works policies and practices.

Other

Eric Lamberton thanked the CAC members for volunteering to serve on this committee. He went on to explain the recent National Accreditation that has been awarded to the City of Newport News Public Works Department.

Next Meeting Date

Staff recommended having monthly meetings until the CAC became established and then quarterly meetings thereafter. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 2, 2003 at 6:00 p.m. in the Warwick Conference Room of Fountain Plaza. Light snacks and refreshments will be provided.

Meeting Adjourned

8:30 p.m.