

**RICHMOND REGIONAL PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION**  
**Minutes of Meeting**  
**September 10, 2009**

**Members/Alternates Present**

Willie L. Bennett (M) ..... County of Henrico  
Malvern R. “Rudy” Butler (M).....County of Goochland  
Deborah B. Coates (A).....County of Hanover  
Douglas G. Conner (M) .....City of Richmond  
Robert R. Cosby (M).....County of Powhatan  
James B. Donati (M), Vice Chairman..... County of Henrico  
Marleen K. Durfee (M).....County of Chesterfield  
Daniel A. Gecker (M) .....County of Chesterfield  
John E. Gordon, Jr. (M) .....County of Hanover  
Kathy C. Graziano (M), Chairman .....City of Richmond  
James M. Holland (M) .....County of Chesterfield  
Dorothy Jaeckle (M) .....County of Chesterfield  
E. Martin Jewell (M).....City of Richmond  
Bonnie-Leigh Jones (M) ..... County of Henrico  
David A. Kaechele (M)..... County of Henrico  
Patricia S. O’Bannon (M) ..... County of Henrico  
C. Harold Padgett (M).....County of Hanover  
Edward W. Pollard (M)..... County of New Kent  
George K. Roarty (M).....County of Chesterfield  
Charles R. Samuels (M) .....City of Richmond  
Robert R. Setliff (M).....County of Hanover  
Randall R. Silber (A) ..... County of Henrico  
Frank J. Thornton (M)..... County of Henrico  
Stran L. Trout (M), Treasurer ..... County of New Kent  
Joseph B. Walton (M) .....County of Powhatan

**Members Absent**

Karin Carmack (M).....County of Powhatan  
Timothy W. Cotman, Sr. (M)..... County of Charles City  
Evan Fabricant (M) .....County of Hanover  
Richard W. Glover (M)..... County of Henrico  
John C. Grier (M).....City of Richmond  
Russell J. Gulley (M) .....County of Chesterfield  
Courtney G. Hyers (M).....County of Goochland  
Beverley C. Lacy (M) .....City of Richmond  
Faye O. Prichard (M), Secretary .....Town of Ashland  
Arthur S. Warren (M) .....County of Chesterfield

**Others Present**

John R. Amos..... RRPDC Legal Counsel  
Charles Hartgrove .....Town of Ashland  
Laura Lafayette ..... Richmond Association of Realtors  
Curt Nellis.....County of Chesterfield  
Jeremy Raw..... VDOT

**Staff Present**

Robert A. Crum, Jr..... Executive Director  
Jo A. Evans ..... Assistant Executive Director  
Julie H. Fry..... Executive Secretary  
Sulabh Aryal ..... Intern  
Anne Darby ..... Associate Planner  
Natalie Díaz-Taylor ..... Receptionist/Secretary  
Chuck Gates ..... Communications Coordinator  
Jin Lee..... Senior Planner  
Daniel N. Lysy .....Director, Transportation  
Greta Ryan ..... Intern  
Sarah Smith..... Senior Planner  
Jackie S. Stewart ..... Director, Planning/IS  
Peter M. Sweetland ..... Finance and Contracts Administrator  
Kathy Wright ..... Intern

**Call to Order**

Chairman Graziano called the regularly scheduled September 10, 2009 RRPDC meeting to order at approximately 1:05 p.m. in the RRPDC board room. She then led the Commission members in the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

**I. ADMINISTRATION**

**A. Certification by Commission Executive Director of Meeting Quorum**

Mr. Crum certified that a quorum of members was present.

**B. Requests for Additions or Changes in Order of Business**

Chairman Graziano asked if there were any additions or changes to be made to the agenda. As there were no additions or changes noted, the agenda was accepted as presented.

### **C. Open Public Comment Period**

Chairman Graziano asked if there was anyone from the public in attendance who wished to make a comment to members of the Commission. She reminded speakers that their time is limited to three minutes. There were no requests from the public to address the Commission, and the Chairman closed the public comment period.

### **D. Chairman's Report**

Chairman Graziano said she did not have a formal report. However, she wanted to let members know that she had attended a meeting of the Virginia Municipal League earlier today and during discussions on the state budget, it was reported that the outlook was not good.

### **E. Approval of Minutes – July 9, 2009 Meeting**

Chairman Graziano presented minutes from the July 9, 2009 meeting on behalf of Ms. Prichard, who could not attend today's meeting. There being no discussion, on motion made by Mr. Butler and seconded by Mr. Gordon, the minutes were approved as presented.

### **F. Approval of June and July 2009 Financial Reports**

Chairman Graziano asked Mr. Trout to present this item.

Mr. Trout stated the financial report is included in the agenda book under Tab 2. There being no discussion, on motion made by Mr. Trout and seconded by Ms. Jones, the June and July 2009 financial reports were accepted for audit as presented.

### **G. Executive Director's Report**

Mr. Crum brought the members' attention to the monthly staff activity report which is included in the agenda book under Tab 3. Mr. Crum noted it had been a busy summer for staff, and work tasks undertaken over the summer were detailed in the enclosed report. He said he would like to introduce two new staff members: Natalie Díaz-Taylor, Receptionist/Secretary, and Charles Gates, Communications Coordinator.

Mr. Crum announced that the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO) recently notified staff that the Richmond Area MPO has been awarded the National Award for Innovative Practice in Urban Transportation Planning – the 64 Express James River Barge Project. This project was led by Barbara Nelson, RRPDC Principal Planner. She led her team in this project from conception to completion in about 16 months. Ms. Nelson will be attending the

national AMPO conference to accept this award on behalf of the RRPDC and RAMPO.

The Capital Region Collaborative (CRC) continues its work. A press conference was held in July, with the participation of many Commission members, during which resolutions in support of extending high speed rail to the Richmond Region were presented to Governor Kaine. There were over 20 resolutions of support from all nine jurisdictions, local chambers of commerce, and other regional business organizations. A photo of those involved is included in the agenda book, under Tab 3. Mr. Crum thanked everyone for their involvement and support. In all jurisdictions, the vote to approve these resolutions was unanimous. The CRC is in the process of meeting with the Region's school superintendents to identify early childhood education needs. About half of the superintendents met with the CRC last month and the remainder will meet with CRC members next week. The CRC will also meet with other groups to obtain feedback on regional issues of interest.

Mr. Crum asked Ms. Evans to give an update on the Regional Grants Warehouse. Ms. Evans said the group has met twice and plans to meet regularly on the third Thursday of each month. The group is considering name choices – the Greater Richmond Area Networking and Technical Support Group (GRANTS) or the Regional Area Funding Team (RAFT). Surveys have been sent to each jurisdiction regarding funding needs in each locality and future issues for funding. After the survey results are received, the group will begin to look for funding opportunities to meet these needs. The group is also looking at a regional cost sharing license venture for a program already being used in the Town of Ashland and the City of Richmond. This is a program called eCIVIS that will identify private funding sources for governments. The fee is based on population. The group is researching to see if this license can be obtained for a lesser fee at a regional level. This information will be brought back to the members of the Commission and to the localities for action should a cost savings be realized. Ms. Evans said the group is also researching the viability of cross-training since some jurisdictions have more expertise in some areas than others with regard to grant writing and other grant activities. A database is also being developed to have information on grant opportunities available for all localities to access. The chairman of the group is Chris Johnston (Richmond) and the vice chairman is Karen Bailey (Powhatan).

Mr. Crum also pointed out improvements that have been made to the Board Room. He said one of the main issues that led to the improvements was that not all Board members were able to be seated at the table. Another issue was accessibility for everyone who attends the meetings. Following the July meeting, Mr. Crum contacted each of the Executive Committee members to receive authorization to combine the Executive Meeting Room with the Board Room. He asked members to provide feedback on how to continue to improve the space. Mr. Holland said he appreciated the changes that have been made.

## **II. OLD BUSINESS**

### **A. Jurisdictional Committees Reports**

Chairman Graziano asked Mr. Gordon if he would like to give a report on meetings of these committees.

Mr. Gordon reported that the committees had met jointly in July to receive an update from staff on regional priorities. He said participation and attendance continues to be great. Mr. Gordon said he feels the committees are functioning as intended and they do meet jointly on a quarterly basis. He said he feels this is very beneficial to the process and believes other members on the committees feel the same. He asked Mr. Crum to give a summary of the update provided to the committees.

Mr. Crum said the committees received a report on each of the Board's regional priorities:

- Capital Region Collaborative: This update was given previously during the Executive Director's Report
- Emergency Management Planning Program (UASI): An update will be given later during this meeting.
- Regional Grants Warehouse: This update was given previously during the Executive Director's Report.
- Regional Water and Sewer Inventory: This project is nearing completion. Staff has collected data on water and sewer service areas, where these areas are now located and where they will be in the future, and water supply and waste water capacity.
- Regional Green Infrastructure Project: If anyone would like to see this report, please contact staff.
- GIS Strategic Plan
- RRPDC Logo and Name Change: More discussion on this will take place during today's meeting.

The committees will meet jointly on September 16 to begin discussions on a regional legislative agenda. If any members have issues to bring forward, Mr. Crum asked them to contact him or their representative on the appropriate jurisdictions committees.

Mr. Walton asked about the status of the Transportation Funding Strategies Work Group. Mr. Crum noted he will begin outreach to members of this group next week to set up a meeting date. He said he hopes this meeting will be able to take place within the next couple of weeks.

### **III. NEW BUSINESS**

#### **A. Regional Housing Market Trends**

Chairman Graziano thanked Mr. Crum for arranging this presentation. Chairman Graziano said Laura Lafayette, who is with the Richmond Association of Realtors, will be presenting information on housing market trends not only in the Richmond Region, but also within each locality. She said she believes it is important for Commission members to be aware of these trends. Chairman Graziano said that Mr. Crum is recommending this be an annual presentation to monitor housing trends in the localities. She asked that questions be held until the presentation is finished.

Ms. Lafayette thanked members of the Commission for the opportunity to speak to them today. She noted that housing trends are unique to each area of the country. Other points made during her presentation included:

- Units sold regionally in 2004 numbered 18,944; units sold in 2009 through July are 5,982
- Inventory supply has increased substantially in each location which indicates a buyer's market
- The higher the price range of the house on the market, the longer it takes to sell
- Foreclosed and distressed properties are selling with an average selling price of \$150,000
- Condominium sales have declined more than single family homes
- Mortgage brokers such as Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac are making condo loans more restrictive
- Incentives should be offered to all home buyers to stimulate the market
- Home Buyer Tax Credits should apply to more than just first-time home buyers
- The numbers of unsheltered people have declined
- Job security is a factor in deciding to purchase a home; sole breadwinners are less likely to purchase homes
- Many sellers are returning to rental properties when they sell a home
- Older home owners are refinancing instead of purchasing another home
- Alternate sources of income need to be identified for localities to supplement real estate taxes

Ms. Lafayette suggested local leaders focus on the following questions:

- Are state and local governments too reliant on real estate related industries for income?
- Will consumers fundamentally change their home buying habits/ preferences, *i.e.*, are the days of "bigger is better" gone?

- Will infill development, denser development, close-in development, and/or cluster development with mixed use components be the future?
- If the majority of home sales are in the most affordable communities and those communities are some of the oldest, what steps should be taken to preserve those communities and attract the next generation of home buyers to them?

Mr. Butler noted that many people would like to take advantage of the first time buyers tax credit, but they are unable to secure loans. Ms. Lafayette said she believes those who are credit worthy are not able to secure loans and this should be addressed in some way.

Mr. Pollard asked if the closure of large businesses in the area has impacted the housing market. Ms. Lafayette replied this has impacted foreclosure rates. Prime, fixed rate mortgages now count toward one-third of foreclosure starts. This is true for all economic levels. There has been an increase in short-sells – sellers not being able to sell their homes for the amount of the loans they have.

Mr. Jewell asked how local governments can influence banks to increase their loan activities to those who can qualify for loans and to offer additional loan products to help with expenses. Ms. Lafayette said she believes banks are doing a better job today than in months past. Many banks have eased restrictions a bit but she thinks the large mortgage brokers need to provide leadership to influence the banking industry.

**[The recording equipment malfunctioned at this time and minutes following are written from staff notes.]**

Mr. Jewell noted that \$70 billion in stimulus money has been allocated to assist with foreclosures; however, only 10% of these funds have been expended. Ms. Lafayette said she was not sure why no more than this had been spent and would need to look into this and get back to Mr. Jewell with her findings.

Ms. O'Bannon said her understanding was that the sub-prime loans contributed to the current situation and that there is a lot of commercial space for rent due to business closures.

Ms. Durfee asked how the current situation compares with the recession during the 1990s and if this is impacting loan defaults. Ms. Lafayette said many workers are finding they need to stay in jobs longer instead of retiring. This is in turn limiting the number of positions available for college graduates. She said this has also increased the number of short-sells and is impacting every economic level. She noted that not everyone should be a home owner even if affordable homes are available.

Mr. Kaechele asked if the figures provided included new homes. Ms. Lafayette said if the new homes are represented by realtors, the numbers were included. Since new home starts are down, there may not be many new homes included in the figures she provided.

Mr. Crum said copies of Ms. Lafayette's presentation were available on the table in the back of the room if anyone would like a copy. Ms. Lafayette said she would be glad to make the information available to localities if they contacted her. Chairman Graziano thanked Ms. Lafayette for her presentation.

## **B. Regional Emergency Management Program (UASI)**

Chairman Graziano indicated that Mr. Crum and Curt Nellis will provide this presentation.

**[The recording equipment began functioning again at this point.]**

Mr. Crum said a proposal will be presented on a new program for the RRPDC. After the presentation, a request will be made to Commission members that a memorandum of understanding be approved that will allow RRPDC to hire three emergency management planners. Mr. Crum introduced Mr. Curt Nellis, Deputy Emergency Management Coordinator for Chesterfield County and Chairman of a subcommittee of the Urban Area Work Group (UAWG).

Mr. Nellis noted this request was made to the executive directors of two PDCs this past spring. The grant that will be discussed today is the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) Grant which is a federal grant from the Department of Homeland Security intended to improve regional capabilities through collaboration. He discussed this grant program with both the Small and Large Jurisdictions Committees for their feedback prior to bringing this to the Commission for approval.

Mr. Nellis said the grant in Central Virginia has been available since 2004 (\$6.5 million for five jurisdictions). The grant was renewed in 2008 and increased to 20 jurisdictions (\$1.7 million). It is expected that grant will receive about \$2 million per year going forward.

Other PDCs included in this grant in addition to the RRPDC will be, Crater PDC, George Washington PDC, Middle Peninsula PDC, and Commonwealth PDC. Most of these have been contacted with information on the project.

There will be three planner positions funded by the UASI grant. One, a principal planner, will be funded this winter and two senior planners will be funded in federal FY 10. The proposal is for RRPDC to hire these three planners. The grant will cover salaries, benefits, supplies, travel, training, and all overhead costs. They will be employees of the RRPDC, under contract, with a stipulation

that if the grant money is withdrawn, the positions will no longer be available. The planners will be supervised jointly by RRPDC and the UAWG.

A budget and annual work plan will be developed jointly by RRPDC and UAWG. Two of the planners will be assigned to rural jurisdictions and one will be assigned to urban jurisdictions. One military facility will be assigned to each planner. These facilities are not part of the grant, but they are considered part of the jurisdictions. One planner will be housed at Crater PDC with the other two being housed at RRPDC.

Tasks will include the following:

- Establish a working relationship with local EMs and VDEM
- In concert with the local EM, determine what planning support is needed
- Provide support to the Capability Assessment project
- Assist local EMs with implementing recommendations from the Capability Assessment
- Provide planning support to the UAWG in the development of regional plans, planning strategies, and future investment projects
- Up to 20% of the planners' time will be allocated to PDC emergency management goals and objectives
- Assess how PDC products and services can enhance local EM planning activities
- Attend various meetings and professional development opportunities in order to provide the highest quality planning products possible
- Participate in the development of the annual work plan

Mr. Crum summarized the proposal as:

- Three emergency management planners will be RRPDC employees
- These are contract positions as specified by the Small and Large Jurisdictions Committees
- The grant covers salary and overhead costs
- Request for the Commission to approve the Memorandum of Understanding

Mr. Jewell asked how the positions will be advertised and who will make the hiring decision. Mr. Nellis said RRPDC will use its normal hiring and advertising procedure. Applications will be reviewed jointly by RRPDC and UAWG. Mr. Crum noted the local newspapers will be used as well as professional publications to ensure as many people as possible will see the positions. Mr. Nellis said the grant will cover any advertising costs.

Mr. Kaechele asked if this grant was related to FEMA and if all emergencies will be considered. Mr. Nellis said it is part of the Department of Homeland Security. He asked if Mr. Kaechele was referring to the Target Capability Assessment. Mr. Kaechele asked what types of emergencies the planners will address. Mr. Nellis

said they will address all hazard planning. Mr. Kaechele asked if there was a priority list. Mr. Nellis said this will be determined by local plans. In Chesterfield County, for example, top hazard planning priorities are flooding and severe winter storms.

Mr. Crum said RRPDC legal counsel has reviewed the MOU.

Mr. Gecker moved that the proposed Memorandum of Understanding with reference to the Emergency Management Program be approved as described. Mr. Gordon seconded the motion.

Ms. O'Bannon asked if these planners would be involved with interoperability issues. Mr. Nellis said the planners will attend any of these meetings as identified.

There being no further discussion, the motion carried.

### **C. Proposed RRPDC Logo / Name Change**

Chairman Graziano said this proposal has been discussed by both the Small and Large Jurisdictions Committees and was recommended to the Commission by members of the committees. Chairman Graziano noted that due to time constraints, she would allow ten minutes for discussion of this item and if there was no decision made, the item would be held over until the next meeting.

Mr. Crum said one of the regional initiatives in the work program is a public relations strategy to look at approaches that can be used by the PDC to let the community know what the PDC is doing. Following a preliminary discussion with the jurisdictional committees, staff worked with a local community college design class. Members of this class heard a presentation by staff on what the PDC encompasses, and the students did their own research on PDCs. Several logo designs were presented to staff, along with a suggestion that a name change also be considered. RRPDC staff selected the logo and name being presented today.

This design was presented to the jurisdictional committees and after further discussion, the design and name being presented today was endorsed by both committees. Mr. Crum briefly described the design concept. The new name being proposed is the Capital Planning District. The jurisdictional committees felt that being located in the capital city separated the agency from other PDCs and that this should be incorporated into the name.

During discussions, it was determined that the current name is very lengthy and very bureaucratic. A tag line was added to include a reference to the Richmond Region and set a mission for the PDC: Strengthening the quality of life in the Richmond Region. The blue VA in the center is an artistic representation of the state and the color was chosen from the state flag. The acronym would be CPD.

Should the Commission approve the name change, both the Charter and Bylaws would need to be amended. Staff would then work with legal counsel to make these revisions and bring them back to the Commission in October. Should these revisions be approved, Mr. Crum stated he would take these revisions to each of the member jurisdictions for their consideration and approval. Each jurisdiction would need to approve this to facilitate the change.

Mr. Crum said he would appreciate input from Commission members on how to proceed.

Chairman Graziano asked if there were any questions.

Ms. Jones said she was concerned about the cost involved to create new letterhead, etc. She said she would like to know how to respond to constituents on why this expenditure was being made now during the tight economic times. She said the VA in the center of the design would cause confusion with the new acronym. The C could mean either Central or Capital. Ms. Jones said the regional aspect of the board is its strength, and she feels it should not be taken out of the name. This may not be the type of political or marketing statement the Commission would want to make.

Mr. Crum said with regard to the cost impact, this would be phased in as supplies of letterhead, etc., are depleted. A phased approach would mitigate any financial impact. The other concerns expressed did surface during discussions at the jurisdictional committee meetings. Staff did consider other design options without the VA, which had a negative impact on the art work. Mr. Crum said if members were not comfortable with the name change, the current name could be incorporated into the new logo. Mr. Crum said he would encourage members to consider a fresh, new look for the Commission.

Mr. Butler asked legal counsel if votes taken in the localities needed to be a majority or unanimous votes. Mr. Amos said localities would need to pass concurrent resolutions. A majority vote within the locality would pass the concurrent resolution. All nine jurisdictions would need to have concurrent resolutions for the name change to be made.

Ms. Jaeckle said the Capital Planning District sounds like a piece of geography instead of a board. She said she felt this was misleading.

Mr. Kaechele asked how much discussion was held on retaining the word commission. Mr. Crum said there was some discussion as to whether this organization is a commission and what the preference would be. He said if members were not comfortable with the name Capital Planning District and would like to keep Richmond Regional Planning, he would recommend dropping either the word district or commission.

Chairman Graziano said she did not feel like members were ready to vote on this proposal. Mr. Crum said he could take this back to the jurisdictional committees for further discussion.

Mr. Setliff noted that both jurisdictional committees had already discussed this change and had agreed on what was being presented.

Mr. Crum said he was hearing that he should bring this item back to the Commission members with other options. Mr. Holland said he would recommend this course of action, and Chairman Graziano said this is what staff should do.

Mr. Jewell asked if more study would be done on the design. Chairman Graziano said the jurisdictional committees had already made recommendations on this and due to the time factor, she is asking to table this discussion until staff has other options for members to consider. Mr. Jewell asked how he could communicate other ideas to staff. Chairman Graziano said any other comments should be forwarded to staff by phone or email.

#### **D. Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) Program**

Chairman Graziano asked Ms. Evans to present this item.

Ms. Evans reported the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) is providing funds for energy efficiency and conservation projects and programs to the non-entitlement localities of Ashland, Charles City, Goochland, New Kent, and Powhatan. The larger jurisdictions will receive block grant funding directly. The state has asked PDCs to promote this program and to work with the eligible localities during the application process. The state is offering compensation to PDCs to take this role. Staff is asking for authorization from the Commission to take part in this program to assist the localities.

Mr. Butler moved that staff be authorized to participate in this program. The motion was seconded by Mr. Trout. There being no further discussion, the motion carried.

### **IV. OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **A. Committee Reports**

There were no other committee reports.

#### **B. Announcements**

There were no announcements.

**C. For Your Information**

Included in this section was a press release from Governor Kaine's office regarding the high speed rail initiative.

**V. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Chairman Graziano adjourned the meeting at approximately 2:45 p.m.

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Robert A. Crum, Jr.  
Executive Director

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Kathy C. Graziano  
Chairman