

RICHMOND REGIONAL PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION
Minutes of Meeting
February 12, 2009

Members/Alternates Present

Malvern R. "Rudy" Butler (M).....County of Goochland
Karin Carmack (M).....County of Powhatan
Deborah B. Coates (A).....County of Hanover
Douglas G. Conner (M)City of Richmond
Robert R. Cosby (M).....County of Powhatan
Timothy W. Cotman, Sr., Chairman (M)..... County of Charles City
James B. Donati (M), Treasurer..... County of Henrico
Evan Fabricant (M)County of Hanover
Daniel A. Gecker (M)County of Chesterfield
Richard W. Glover (M)..... County of Henrico
John E. Gordon, Jr. (M)County of Hanover
Kathy C. Graziano (M), Vice ChairmanCity of Richmond
Jerilynn T. "Jeri" Grigsby (M)..... County of Henrico
Russell J. Gulley (M)County of Chesterfield
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
Beverley C. Lacy (M)City of Richmond
Patricia S. O'Bannon (M) County of Henrico
C. Harold Padgett (M).....County of Hanover
Faye O. Prichard (M)Town of Ashland
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
Millard D. Stith (A).....County of Chesterfield
Frank J. Thornton (M)..... County of Henrico
Stran L. Trout (M), Secretary County of New Kent
Joseph B. Walton (M)County of Powhatan

Members Absent

Marleen K. Durfee (M).....County of Chesterfield
Courtney G. Hyers (M).....County of Goochland
John C. Grier (M).....City of Richmond
Brenda L. "Sam" Snyder (M) County of New Kent
Arthur S. Warren (M)County of Chesterfield

Others Present

John R. Amos..... RRPDC Legal Counsel
Nora AmosTown of Ashland
Tom Ballou VDEQ
John T. BentonCitizen, Chesterfield County
Sherrie Brach United Way of Greater Richmond and Petersburg
Carolyn CiosCounty of Powhatan
George Homewood County of New Kent
Craig MacIvor..... VCU
Doris McLeod..... VDEQ
Barbara Sipe..... United Way of Greater Richmond and Petersburg
Charles Smith.....PBS&J
Paul Traff Timmons Group
Thelma Watson..... Senior Connections

Staff Present

Robert A. Crum, Jr..... Executive Director
Julie H. Fry..... Executive Secretary
Anne DarbyAssociate Planner
Allyson Finchum.....Principal Planner
Jin Lee.....Senior Planner
Sarah Smith.....Senior Planner
Jackie S. Stewart..... Director Planning/IS
Peter M. Sweetland Finance and Contracts Administrator
Matt Weaver..... Intern

Call to Order

Chairman Cotman called the regularly scheduled February 12, 2009 RRPDC meeting to order at approximately 1:00 p.m. in the RRPDC board room. He 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 Cotman asked if there were any additions or changes to be made to the agenda. There being none, the agenda was accepted as printed.

C. Open Public Comment Period

Chairman Cotman asked if there was anyone from the public in attendance who wished to make a comment. He reminded speakers that their time is limited to three minutes.

Chairman Cotman recognized Mr. John Benton.

Mr. Benton said he has spoken to the Commission on prior occasions. He said he has brought up a number of issues and some of those have not been addressed. He said the one issue he thinks is important is that state laws have established this PDC. He said the law requires the PDC to have a strategic plan. He said the period should be five years but the law does not specify a period. Mr. Benton said the law has specific requirements on what the plan should contain. He said he calls a strategic plan a common sense business plan, and he asked what the PDC considers to be its strategic plan for the next several years. Mr. Benton said he believes the PDC does things on an ad-hoc basis. He does not see that there is a plan. Mr. Benton stated that over the last 18 months he has heard many discussions that could have had answers to the questions if there was a strategic plan in place. Mr. Benton said he would not go into what a strategic plan should involve and there are many examples found on the internet. Mr. Benton noted that Chesterfield County and the county school board have strategic plans which he finds to be very good.

Mr. Benton said he would encourage the PDC to set out to form a strategic plan. He said he made the suggestion some time ago to create a strategic plan for GIS. He's happy to say, as Mr. Gordon has reported, that this is being done. Mr. Benton said based on what he knows of the GIS users in the jurisdictions, as he has met with them before, he thinks these people have a good idea of what a GIS strategic plan should be. He has spoken with the GIS manager and made suggestions regarding this issue.

Mr. Benton noted he feels there should be an over-arching plan for the organization, not just GIS. He said a number of initiatives are being started on an ad-hoc basis. All of this should be in a comprehensive strategic plan. This would allow communications among the members and the jurisdictions. Mr. Benton said he is speaking only for himself, as a citizen of Chesterfield County. He believes it would be helpful for everyone, especially the PDC staff, to know what the big picture is for where the agency wants to go.

Mr. Benton thanked members for their time.

There being no other requests from the public to address the Commission, the Chairman closed the public comment period.

D. Chairman's Report

Chairman Cotman said he would like to announce that there are some new members to the Commission who have been appointed by their jurisdictions to fill expired terms. If the members are present, he asked them to please stand and be recognized:

From Henrico County, Bonnie-Leigh Jones, who is a member of the Henrico County Planning Commission and replaces Mr. Ray Jernigan.

From the City of Richmond, Douglas Conner, Martin Jewell, and Charles Samuels have been appointed to replace Ellen Robertson, Delores McQuinn, and Bill Pantele.

Chairman Cotman welcomed the new members and said if they had any questions, staff would be glad to help answer them.

E. Approval of Minutes – December 11, 2008 Meeting

Chairman Cotman asked Mr. Trout to present this item.

Mr. Trout noted the minutes were included in the agenda book. He said that Ms. Snyder, New Kent County, had contacted him with a correction.

He noted on the bottom of page 6, in the beginning of the last paragraph, Ms. Snyder indicated she worked for Delegate Johnson, not Delegate Jones.

Mr. Trout said he would move that the minutes be approved as corrected. The motion was seconded by Ms. Graziano. There being no further discussion, the motion carried.

F. Approval of November and December 2008 Financial Reports

Chairman Cotman asked Mr. Donati to present this item.

Mr. Donati noted there are two sets of financial reports this month included in the agenda book under Tab 2. There being no discussion, on motion made by Mr. Donati and seconded by Ms. Graziano, the November and December 2008 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 reported that the Collaborative Advisory Team had met on February 9 and will meet again on February 20. A regular meeting date has been set by the Team, which will be the third Friday of each month, beginning at 7:30 a.m. These meetings will be held at the Chamber office. He noted the Team is getting close to establishing a mission statement, to defining what the Collaborative will accomplish, and defining what the outcomes of this initiative should be.

For new members of the Commission, an orientation meeting will be held within the next month or so. This will offer background information on the RRPDC and MPO. The orientation will be open to any Commission member who'd like to attend. He noted RRPDC staff is available as a resource for members and members should not hesitate to call on staff for assistance.

Mr. Crum reminded members that the Commission had authorized staff to proceed with a Regional Infrastructure Initiative. Staff is collecting data on existing water systems, sewer systems, and cell towers. Reports will be provided to the jurisdictional committees on the progress of this initiative.

Mr. Crum noted that some members had contacted him on how the Commission presents its image in the community. A lot of that interest is centered around the RRPDC logo. Staff is working with an art class at John Tyler Community College to create a new logo. The class will be meeting with RRPDC staff to learn about the RRPDC and MPO. In the spring, the class will present its ideas to staff. Staff will then short-list the designs and have the students make a presentation to the Commission in May.

Ms. O'Bannon noted that there was a 911 and after-the-storm agreement with the local public broadcasting radio station. Each jurisdiction entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the radio station for a period of one year. Mr. Crum said this will be an item on a future RRPDC meeting agenda along with a request for the local jurisdictions to report on their efforts in renewing the MOUs.

II. OLD BUSINESS

A. Jurisdictional Committees Reports

Chairman Cotman asked Mr. Gordon if he would like to give a report from the Jurisdictions Committees.

Mr. Gordon reported that both jurisdictional committees met jointly on January 8. The main topic was the Regional GIS Initiative that the Commission had adopted previously. There were GIS coordinators from each member jurisdiction in attendance who gave updates on what is being done locally and on a regional basis. This group meets monthly under the RRPDC's leadership to discuss regional opportunities and challenges. It was agreed that this group should

develop a strategic plan. RRPDC staff will coordinate this effort and a report will be brought back to the Small and Large Jurisdictions Committees.

Both jurisdictional committees agreed to set regular meeting dates. The Large Jurisdictions Committee will meet the first Thursday of each month at noon, and the Small Jurisdictions Committee will meet on the second Tuesday of each month at noon. The two committees agreed that if there was no need to meet, they would not. Neither committee will meet in February. There was also agreement to meet jointly on a quarterly basis.

Chairman Cotman asked Ms. Prichard if she had anything to add. Ms. Prichard said Mr. Gordon had covered the key points.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. Older Dominion and Richmond Wave Project

Mr. Crum introduced Thelma Bland Watson, Senior Connections – The Capital Area Agency on Aging; Sherrie Brach, United Way of Greater Richmond and Petersburg; and John Martin, Southeastern Institute of Research.

The Team proceeded to provide a PowerPoint presentation on their project. The goal of the Richmond Wave Project is to develop strategic plans for addressing the older population within the Richmond Region and the City of Petersburg, with a focus on the future needs of the baby boomer population. This effort will examine current infrastructure to support older citizens within the study area and is a partnership managed by the United Way of Greater Richmond and Petersburg, Senior Connections – The Capital Area Agency on Aging, the Southeastern Institute of Research, and the Richmond Memorial Health Foundation. The presentation also included demographic data for the Richmond Region and the challenges and opportunities the upcoming age wave presents for the community.

Following the presentation, Chairman Cotman asked if there were any questions.

Mr. Glover asked how the areas of need had been determined and how the safety issue had been determined to be a concern. He noted that in the City of Richmond, great improvements had been made on the safety issue. He said the number one charge of local elected officials is public safety. Mr. Glover wanted to know why safety did not appear in the top tier issues.

Mr. Martin replied that it was not in the top tier of performance but was in terms of expectations. Safety, quality of health care, and education are usually in the top tier in expectations. The region had a problem with safety in performance. Being part of the Vision 2010 work done by the Chamber several years ago, Mr.

Martin felt there was a problem with perception. He noted the scores have improved.

Mr. Glover said a lot of these same issues were identified in a study done several years ago called The Graying of Suburbia (Dayton, OH). Mr. Glover noted that vast improvement has been made in lowering the level of crime within the region.

Ms. Jaeckle asked if perhaps the study was asking how safe people felt in their homes, such as safe from falls and other injuries.

Mr. Martin said he was using the safety example in terms of a whole regional competitiveness. The attributes were looked at for a whole population and what were the expectations for the values that should guide planning and how the region was performing on those.

Mr. Kaechele asked if the information was collected from regional focus groups.

Mr. Martin said a study was done statewide, though the Older Dominion Partnership, of about 1800 residents with a high concentration of seniors in that group. A larger sample of those were Richmond residents. Through the Chamber, a survey of business CEOs was done on their concerns regarding the age wave and how to plan for their employees.

Mr. Kaechele asked if there was concern regarding Social Security funds. Mr. Martin indicated there was.

Mr. Thornton asked if there were persons to contact who could make similar presentations in other public venues, such as town meetings. Mr. Martin said resources would be organized for that purpose.

Mr. Gordon asked how the RRPDC was expected to participate.

Mr. Martin replied that they would like a representative from RRPDC to participate in the organizational aspects to learn more and then determine how the RRPDC could be involved.

Ms. Sipe, United Way of Greater Richmond and Petersburg, added that the group is still in an organizational mode. She said they would like for Commission members to go back to their jurisdictions to talk about the project and to determine what information is needed to know how best to participate.

Mr. Gordon said that RRPDC is a partner with the Chamber in the Capital Region Collaborative. He said he thought RRPDC could participate in the project through the Collaborative. The Collaborative is organizing as well, and this may be a candidate for an action item of the Collaborative.

Chairman Cotman summarized that RRPDC staff will be in contact with the Age Wave Project and report back to Commission members on how the RRPDC can participate.

Mr. Crum said the presentation will be posted on the RRPDC website should anyone be interested in the data presented today.

Chairman Cotman thanked Mr. Martin and the others for their presentation.

Chairman Cotman reminded members to speak into the microphones so everyone can hear. He also noted that two of the new Commission members had arrived at the meeting – Mr. Martin Jewell and Mr. Charles Samuels, both from the City of Richmond. He welcomed them to the Commission.

B. Proposed Ozone Air Quality Maintenance Plan Contingency Measures for the Richmond Nonattainment / Maintenance Area

Chairman Cotman asked Mr. Crum to introduce this item.

Mr. Crum introduced Doris McLeod, Air Quality Planner with the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VDEQ).

Ms. McLeod provided an informational presentation on air quality within the Richmond Region. The presentation included background information on the selection and implementation of contingency measures for attainment of ozone air quality standards in the EPA designated Richmond Nonattainment/Maintenance Area.

Following the presentation, Ms. McLeod asked if there were any questions.

Mr. Silber asked how household products could be regulated to limit the amount of pollutants in the air.

Ms. McLeod said there are reporting requirements that manufacturers which sell in Virginia must send to VDEQ. She noted if the products do not meet the requirements, the products could be banned from being sold in Virginia. She said that nearly every product has been reformulated to meet the requirements.

Mr. Glover asked how a locality can regulate its own emissions; he thought this was policed by state and federal agencies.

Ms. McLeod said localities can affect its local emissions by looking at how growth is planned and by encouraging use of mass transit. Actual policing of industries is done by state and federal agencies.

Mr. Glover asked how trees factored in to producing ozone.

Ms. McLeod said some trees (Southern Loblolly Pine) produce a substance called isoprene. This can act like a violator organic compound in the atmosphere.

Mr. Glover asked how gauges set in wooded areas could be affected in measuring ozone.

Ms. McLeod replied that ozone is created in the atmosphere rather than being emitted from something. It has more of a regional effect than a local effect. The isoprene being emitted in one county has less effect than what would be measured in another county. The Richmond Region could be affected more by ozone being created in another state.

Mr. Glover asked if the haze found in the Blue Ridge Mountains was ozone.

Ms. McLeod said it could be a number of things. Trees produce little violator organic compounds compared to industrial and human sources.

Mr. Glover asked if auto emissions in the Richmond Metro area were controlled by the type of gasoline sold in the area.

Ms. McLeod said that was correct.

Mr. Glover asked how automobiles contribute to pollution in the area.

Ms. McLeod replied that the violator organics in the nitrogen oxides produced by cars are a significant amount of the emissions inventory in the area. Emissions from transportation are going down.

Mr. Jewell asked if air moves from west to east, why aren't elected officials and citizens raising concerns about the proposed clean coal plant in Wise County. He noted the high number of asthma cases in the area and the effect this sort of pollutant could have on the residents. He said he believes this could be one reason the Richmond area (west to east airflow transporting pollutants) has such problems with pollution in the summer.

Ms. O'Bannon noted Virginia Dominion Power has made improvements to its production plants to remove pollutants. She wanted to know if this has made an improvement in the local air quality.

Ms. McLeod said the Wise County plant is being constructed with state of the art technology and will emit 10 to 15 times less pollutant than the average coal fired power plant. This permit has set the standard for the entire country. If the facility is brought online, the older facility (Bremo) will be changed from coal to natural gas. This will offset the emissions from the Wise County facility. Ms. McLeod said she didn't know why this region had not submitted comments on this concern

during the public comment period for the Wise County facility. She said northern Virginia had submitted comments.

She said she understood that Virginia Power spent about \$500 to \$700 million on coal strategies for the Dutch Gap facilities in this area, along with Mount Storm in West Virginia, the Chesapeake facility, and the Yorktown facility. There have been good reductions noted in the control strategies. These are included in the maintenance plan that was presented to members today. Ozone creeps and transports. Reductions in Richmond will help areas down wind as well as in the local areas.

Mr. Jewell said if the Richmond area does not meet the standards, he thinks there should be a regional anti-pollution campaign.

Mr. Fabricant noted pollutants from the Ohio Valley are settling into the Piedmont area.

Ms. McLeod said there are two types of ozone episodes in the Richmond area. There are transport episodes where nearly all ozone is being brought in from the Ohio and Tennessee Valleys and local episodes of stagnant air where ozone is being created by pollution generated within the area. It's dependent on placement of the Bermuda high along with wind speed and direction.

Mr. Conner said he believed there was a self-regulatory program for auto repair shops being used in northern Virginia and Tidewater. He asked if this type of program would be brought into the Richmond area.

Ms. McLeod said that using the self-certification process would be the preferred mechanism for implementing the regulation like the mobile equipment repair and refinishing. More information is available on the VDEQ website.

Mr. Conner asked how this would impact those who go to onsite locations to do auto body repair.

Ms. McLeod said she would have to research this. Mr. Glover said he thought it was regulated by the paint manufacturer and distributor. Mr. Conner said that was not correct, that the ability to paint and repair indoors or outdoors was not regulated. Ms. McLeod said she would be in touch with Mr. Conner regarding his question.

Chairman Cotman thanked Ms. McLeod for her presentation.

C. Green Infrastructure Initiative

Chairman Cotman asked Mr. Crum to present this item.

Mr. Crum said the RRPDC has joined with the Crater Planning District Commission for the first phase of a Green Infrastructure Initiative. He introduced Jackie Stewart, RRPDC Director of Planning, who provided a PowerPoint presentation on this project. Ms. Stewart noted the project is being advanced through a multi-year grant provided by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) through the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program. The focal area of this grant is Sustainable Communities. RRPDC and Crater PDC have selected green infrastructure as the subject matter for Phase I of this grant. The two planning district commissions have joined with the Green Infrastructure Center, Inc. in Charlottesville, Virginia. The Green Infrastructure Center (GIC) is a non-profit organization that assists communities in developing strategies and tools for preserving green infrastructure resources. Year 1/Phase I of this multi-year project is focused on identifying and mapping natural resource features that should be considered for inclusion in a bi-regional green infrastructure overlay and conservation corridor system that will link with the remainder of Virginia's Coastal Zone. In addition to this mapping effort, project products will include a presentation and model text as well as GIS data that can be incorporated into local comprehensive plans and other planning efforts.

Phase I of this grant is approximately 50% complete. In addition to a large amount of GIS mapping of existing resources, RRPDC staff has worked with GIC staff and the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation staff to update and refine state ecological model data for the Region. RRPDC staff has also worked with the Green Infrastructure Center to host two regional green infrastructure review committee meetings. The regional green infrastructure review committee was created to provide oversight for the project as work progresses and consists of local government representatives, land conservation groups, and other project partner organizations.

Ms. Stewart proceeded to brief the Board on specific work tasks related to this project and the methodology for evaluating ecological cores. Following her presentation, she asked if there were any questions.

Ms. O'Bannon asked how local jurisdictions would use the data being collected. She said a resident in her district had clear-cut all of his property and that a permit was not required to do this. She asked how she could promote green infrastructure if residents could clear-cut at any time.

Ms. Stewart said that if the land is deemed agricultural, a permit to clear-cut was not required. She said the county could designate an overlay area to protect green spaces in that manner. She said this is why it is important for jurisdictions to determine how green infrastructure can be maintained during the planning process and build the appropriate regulations into this process.

Mr. Kaechele asked where a typical subdivision would fall on the charts Ms. Stewart had presented.

Ms. Stewart said a typical subdivision probably would not have any real ecological significance because at least 10 acres of the subdivision would need to be intact and not developed to be identified as an ecological core. She said things such as athletic areas, waterways, wildlife trails, etc., should be taken into account during planning.

Mr. Kaechele said he wondered about the practical use of such planning.

Ms. Stewart noted green infrastructure planning encourages homes in clusters with open spaces. Connectivity is encouraged through green infrastructure planning just as it would be with stub road planning.

Ms. O'Bannon said she understood this should be encouraged, but noted her point about agricultural use. If land was clear-cut and corn was planted, there is the issue of ethanol that will impact air quality.

Ms. Stewart said farm fields do have value and are recognized in the model that is being developed.

There were no further questions, and Chairman Cotman thanked Ms. Stewart for her presentation.

D. "64 Express" / James River Barge Project

Mr. Crum said the final presentation will be made by Barb Nelson, RRPDC Principal Planner.

Ms. Nelson reported that on December 1, 2008, a new barge service, known as the "64 Express," was launched between the terminals in the Hampton Roads Region and the Port of Richmond. She provided a presentation with background information on this new service and the economic development opportunities it presents for the Richmond Region.

The collaborative effort of advancing this project from concept to launch included a team of public and private sector interests: the Richmond Area MPO, the U.S. Maritime Administration, the Virginia Port Authority, Port of Richmond, Virginia Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, shipping firms calling on the terminals in the Hampton Roads Region, and James River Barge Line and Norfolk Tug. The Richmond Area MPO is providing \$2.3 million in federal funding to support the project during the first three years of initial operation. The regional vision is to stimulate regional economic development opportunities while providing a sustainable service at the lowest cost possible, to reduce congestion and energy use, improve air quality, and to reduce highway maintenance costs.

Following the presentation, Ms. Nelson said she would be glad to answer any questions.

Ms. O'Bannon asked if the service became profitable, would the MPO be able to recoup some of the investment monies it had provided.

Ms. Nelson said the project is being carefully followed and evaluated. She said the business plans and models evaluated in February 2008 were based on one set of series and assumptions. As things progressed, the plans were modified. The investment was about \$2.3 million of regional CMAQ money; the private investment was between \$6 million and \$7 million. It is not a 50-50 partnership. This has become one of the nation's success stories where an MPO stepped up to work collectively to use this opportunity to create a positive regional economic and environmental impact. Ms. Nelson said the short answer to Ms. O'Bannon's question would be that no money will be returned to investors.

Ms. Nelson pointed out that the Port of Richmond has shown it can be very competitive in its production output with the Port of Norfolk.

Ms. O'Bannon noted that the Port of Richmond has increased security with the increased work. One of her constituents, who is a truck driver, has told her his business has increased. She said this concept was very well thought out and is being executed very well. The Port Authority has adapted by adding stronger security measures.

Ms. Nelson said there was concern with the trucking industry in the beginning as to whether the barge service would be considered direct competition. What is being seen is that truckers in the Richmond area who travelled to Norfolk could only make one round trip per day. To turn a profit, the truckers needed to make two round trips per day. Because of traffic congestion in the Hampton Roads area, this is a challenge. With the containers being brought to Richmond from Norfolk via the waterway, truckers can now make multiple trips.

Mr. Glover asked Ms. Nelson to give him the full names for the acronyms CMAQ and NIT.

Ms. Nelson said CMAQ stood for Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality. This is a funding source provided from the federal government and distributed to the Commonwealth. These are discretionary funds and average about \$9 million per year to put toward projects in the Region.

NIT stands for Norfolk International Terminal.

Mr. Padgett asked how traffic on I-95 is impacted.

Ms. Nelson said about 23% of interstate traffic travels through the Region on I-95.

Mr. Kaechele asked if having barges brought directly to Richmond would cut down on the amount of distribution time.

Ms. Nelson said the total transport time from the time the container is off loaded from the large ship to the dock and out of the port on a truck can be about one week. It can now be off loaded from the large ship to the barge and be in Richmond within 24 hours. This can reduce the amount of transit time for the container by about four days. She said this is being monitored and she can bring more updated information back to Commission members within the next few months.

Ms. O'Bannon said one of the big differences is in the amount of time it takes traffic to get through tunnels in the Hampton Roads area.

Chairman Cotman thanked Ms. Nelson for her presentation.

E. Legislative Update

Chairman Cotman asked Mr. Crum to update members on activities at the General Assembly with regard to the RRPDC Legislative Agenda.

Mr. Crum distributed a summary of some of the legislation being discussed at General Assembly. He said the bills were categorized by the Regional Legislative Agenda, which was endorsed by the RRPDC board.

Mr. Crum said he would not review each bill in the interest of time but would touch on key bills. If any of the members have questions on items listed on the handout, he would encourage members to give him a call. Any bills with a strike-through have not advanced out of committee.

Under Rural Broadband, HB 2423 forms the Governor's Broadband Advisory Council. This will advise the Governor on policy and funding priorities to expedite deployment and reduce the cost of broadband access in the Commonwealth. This has passed the House and is currently in a Senate committee.

The next is HB 2665, which would create the Virginia Broadband Infrastructure Loan Fund. This bill would provide monies used exclusively to fund broadband infrastructure projects undertaken by local governments. There would be priority for loans being taken out by two or more localities. This passed the House and has been read once in the Senate.

Under Impact Fees and Cash Proffers, there were two bills introduced that did not make it out of committee. One would have required localities to phase out the acceptance of cash proffers by June 2014. The other would have allowed localities to reduce or exempt road impact fees for commercial development.

On page 3 of the handout, HB 1579 attempts to capture transportation funding by collecting a portion of economic growth attributed to the different marine terminals in Virginia and use the funds for transportation improvements. This is an existing container tax that would be reallocated to transportation improvements within the Richmond Highway Construction District. This passed the House and is in the Senate Finance Committee.

There were two bills introduced related to a Central Virginia Transportation Authority. Those bills were introduced by Delegate Hall (HB 2667) and Senator Watkins (SB 1534). The House bill was tabled in committee.

The Senate bill has passed the Senate. There are some key differences in this bill compared to what was proposed last year. This proposal identifies only two localities as core localities in the Authority – the City of Richmond and Chesterfield County. The proposed bill reads that the other PDC localities would have the option to join the Authority if the governing bodies approved the action to join. The other main difference is that the previous legislation did not include any specific funding sources. SB 1534 does specify a grantors tax as a funding source. The grantors tax may be increased up to an additional 40¢ per \$100 of real estate transfer; currently the tax is about ten cents. This bill passed the Senate with a vote of 21 – 19. It is now in a House committee. There is a lot of interest in the grantors tax, and a lot of discussion is taking place.

Another bill of interest is HB 1882, which addresses the composition of the Richmond Metropolitan Authority Board. As introduced, the bill would increase representation for the counties. It passed the House 51 – 47 and is currently in a Senate Committee.

There is a bill that has been adopted by the House, HJ 756, which would encourage the Secretary of Transportation to establish a Virginia Association of Metropolitan Planning Associations. This bill is intended to create more of a presence for MPOs as a player in transportation decisions.

Ms. O'Bannon said she had attended a 2010 budget seminar where it was noted that if a locality had broadband access, the locality's credit score was improved and there was a better bond rating.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Committee Reports

There were no other committee reports.

B. Announcements

There were no announcements.

C. For Your Information

Items included in this section were:

- Letter from Charleston, SC mayor, Joe Riley, thanking Mr. Crum for the RRPDC's participation in the November 20, 2008 seminar
- Letter from Senator Jim Webb in reply to a letter from Mr. Crum regarding the proposed economic stimulus package
- Letter from Senator Mark Warner in reply to a letter from Mr. Crum regarding the proposed economic stimulus package
- Article from the Richmond *Times-Dispatch* on regional planning cooperation

V. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, on motion duly made and seconded, Chairman Cotman adjourned the meeting at approximately 3:00 p.m.

Robert A. Crum, Jr.
Executive Director

Timothy W. Cotman, Sr.
Chairman