

Regional Update

A Monthly Report of Activities on the Eastern Shore of Virginia

August 2006

Occohannock Neck Road Development Master Plan Workshop To Be Held August 30

The Accomack-Northampton Regional Housing Authority will hold a stakeholder workshop on Wednesday, August 30, starting at 9:00 a.m. in the Exmore Town Hall. The purpose of the workshop is for interested persons to provide input to the designers of a master plan for a 53-acre parcel of property on Occohannock Neck Road in Exmore. The Authority has a purchase contract on the property and proposes to build affordable homes on it.

Town, county, and housing officials

are invited, as well as neighbors and other interested stakeholders. Architects from Hill Studios will guide attendees through a planning and decision-making process. Hill Studio will summarize participant comments and present a rough draft plan for the property.

“The property is like a blank sheet of canvas,” said Paul Berge, Authority Executive Director. “All ideas will be welcomed. All we know right now is that we want to build homes that are affordable for families making average

and below-average incomes.”

“The plan is likely to include rental units and owner-occupied homes, will have recreational and open space amenities, and will be built in a style and character consistent with town, county and regional values,” said Berge. “But exactly what will be where has not been decided yet. The August 30 workshop will be the first step toward that decision.” For more information on the workshop, call Paul Berge at (757)787-2936, x. 116.



Area on Occohannock Neck Road to be considered at the Workshop

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Housing Choice Voucher Section 8 Program Update

The Housing Choice Voucher Program, more commonly known as the Section 8 program, provides rental assistance to qualifying families. Currently, 472 families are being assisted with this program on the Shore. Up to 538 families can be assisted and staff have pulled 100 families from the waiting list and are working on getting them admitted to the program.

One of the best aspects of this program is the portability option. This allows families to move to other locales for jobs or other reasons. Many of the ones who take this option head to Hampton Roads, Philadelphia, or areas in Maryland.

Housing and Urban Development (HUD) at their last review rated our program troubled. This is of great concern since it is possible to lose the program by staying at this designation too long. They recommended that staff go out and look at a very successful program in Waynesboro, which was done in October 2005. Staff immediately started to make recommended

changes. In July, our program had a peer review. The reviewer was pleased with efforts to improve the file system and made some recommendations for a few additional administrative changes. Commissioners of the Accomack-Northampton Regional Housing Authority were pleased with the results of the review and congratulated staff on their efforts.

The next HUD review will be in the fall and staff anticipate that the program will be moved out of troubled status. Once this is accomplished and another review indicates that the program is doing well, opportunities will open up to the A-NRHA. Two additional programs will become available including the Family Self Sufficiency Program that assists qualifying families with budgeting and has a match for savings to be used only for homeownership or education, and the Homeownership Voucher Program that allows qualifying families to use their voucher to pay a mortgage instead of rent. All of these programs can make a broader framework to assist residents of the Eastern Shore.

Ground Water Committee Unveils Updated Web Site

At the Ground Water Committee's July meeting, a new rewritten web site was presented. New material has been added but much of the original material has been kept. The new site is at www.a-npdc.org/groundwater/index.html.

New features include a list of protection measures residents of the Eastern Shore can undertake along with a new glossary of technical terms. Material from the recent USGS presentation of the Ground Water Model have also been added to the site. All of the Committee's projects now have a dedicated information page.

Soon to come will be an updated listing of the DEQ-issued ground water permits issued for the Eastern Shore and other information from the new USGS model.

In other Ground Water Committee news, the 2006 Ground Water Award Program is open for applications. The deadline for consideration of the 2006 Award is August 31, 2006. The Award is for individuals or institutions that protect and preserve our ground water. Eligible activities include: water conservation, recharge area protection / preservation, aquifer preservation, recycling / reuse, pollution prevention, and public education/community outreach. A short application form is available at www.a-npdc.org/groundwater/gaward.html or you can contact us at (757)787-2936 to have one mailed to you. Presentation of the Award will be at the Ground Water Committee's Annual meeting in December.



Qualifying families can get rental assistance to live in market rate units.

Housing Specialist or Consultant Wanted

Delmarva affordable housing agency seeks Housing Specialist or Consultant for initiative on the Eastern Shore of Virginia to build real estate development and organizational capacity of nonprofit housing sponsors, including the A-NHRC. Nonprofit, development, affordable housing, training experience required. College preferred. Call NCALL at (302)678-9400 for application instructions. Closing date is August 11, 2006. EOE

Grant Accountant Position Available

Responsible for assisting the Housing and Administrative Departments by providing the financial management for a variety of federal and state grants. May also be asked to perform other administrative functions. Prefer proficiency in computer accounting and spreadsheet programs. Starting salary range is \$20,000-\$30,000. Send resume by 5:00 p.m., Monday, August 14, 2006, to Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission, PO Box 417, Accomac, VA 23301. EOE.



How to Contact the A-NPDC

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