

Minutes
Planning Commission
Isle of Wight County
November 18, 2025

1. Call to Order

Planning Commission member Brian Carroll called the Isle of Wight County Planning Commission meeting to order at 6:00 PM on November 18, 2025, in the Board of Supervisors Room at the Isle of Wight County Courthouse, Isle of Wight, Virginia.

Invocation

Commissioner Johnson delivered the invocation.

Pledge of Allegiance

Commissioner Carroll invited everyone present to join in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Roll Call/Determination of a Quorum

Roll was called and the following members were present: Brian Carroll, Jennifer Boykin, Brian Shotwell, George Rawls, and Keith Johnson. The following members were absent: Bobby Bowser, James Ford, Raynard Gibbs, and Matthew Smith.

A quorum was determined.

Commissioner Ford was not present during roll call but joined the meeting at 6:29 p.m.

The Chair and Vice Chair were absent from the meeting. Commissioner Carroll was nominated to serve as Temporary Chair for the duration of the meeting. A motion to appoint Commissioner Carroll as Temporary Chair was made by Commissioner Boykin and seconded by Commissioner Shotwell. The motion passed unanimously.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Amy Ring, Community Development Director
Bobby Jones, County Attorney
Amanda Landrus, Secretary

3. Action on Requests to Withdraw or Table Pending Agenda Items

Temporary Chairman Carroll asked if there were any requests to table or withdrawal agenda items. Amy Ring stated there were no requests.

4. Approval of Agenda

Temporary Chairman Carroll called for a vote to approve the agenda. Commissioner Boykin made the motion to approve the agenda. Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion. Temporary Chairman Carroll asked for all in favor to signify by saying aye. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Consent Agenda

Temporary Chairman Carroll called for a vote to approve the consent agenda. Commissioner Rawls made the motion to approve the consent agenda. Commissioner Boykin seconded the motion. Temporary Chairman Carroll asked for all in favor to signify by saying aye. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Citizens' Comments

Temporary Commissioner Carroll opened the floor for any citizens' comments.

Mr. David Tucker, 6251 Old Stage Highway, Smithfield, spoke regarding concerns related to the former Energy Task Force and issues surrounding Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS).

Mr. Tucker stated that any ordinance addressing BESS that does not restrict systems operated by PJM Transmission Cooperative or Dominion Energy for distribution or community use is, in his view, inappropriate. He argued that any BESS installation that is not “behind the meter,” privately owned, and responsibly managed presents unnecessary financial and operational risks to residential ratepayers.

He remarked that BESS facilities consume more energy than they produce, and that inefficiencies in energy storage ultimately increase costs borne by ratepayers—whether the wasted energy originates from out-of-state transmission, regional distribution, or local community-sharing systems.

Mr. Tucker referenced historic storage facilities at Smith Mountain and Bath County, explaining they were originally designed to manage energy demand fluctuations but still operate at significant inefficiencies. He asserted that Dominion Energy had provided inaccurate information to Halifax County regarding the purpose and number of its operational BESS facilities. According to Mr. Tucker, Dominion operates two BESS sites—Dry Bridge and Scott Solar—both with reported inefficiency rates.

He added that North Carolina’s larger number of BESS systems also demonstrates similar inefficiency issues. Mr. Tucker said his attendance at meetings of the Virginia Commission on Electric Utility Regulation (VCEUR) revealed that utility profits are tied more to capital spending than to operational efficiency. As a ratepayer, he urged both the VCEUR and the State Corporation Commission (SCC) to consider closing facilities he believes pose increased risk or financial harm to residents.

Mr. Tucker described prior interactions with Dominion Energy, stating that representatives had contacted him unsolicited and behaved unprofessionally when he sought information or raised concerns. He also described experiences with the Virginia Department of Energy and a former chair of the Virginia Solar Energy Development and Energy Storage Authority, whom he claims attempted to silence him after he publicly commented on local energy issues.

7. Public Hearings

A. Five Year Comprehensive Plan Review Proposed Revisions

Amy Ring, Community Development Director, gave the following presentation.

Envisioning the Isle Five Year Comprehensive Plan Review Proposed Revisions

Planning Commission Meeting
November 18, 2025

A Comprehensive Plan...

Provides a decision-making guide for future growth and development

- Contains a list of goals to achieve the community's vision;
- Lists actions that need to be taken to make sure the goals happen;
- For each action, the Plan should include who's responsible, about how long it will take, and about how much it will cost;
- Contains a future land use plan showing future recommended land uses to help implement the Plan's goals; and
- Not set in stone! Should be reviewed every five years to see if changes are needed.

Mandatory Five Year Plan Review

- Section 15.2-2230 of the Code of Virginia stipulates that at least once every five years, the comprehensive plan shall be reviewed by the local planning commission to determine whether it is advisable to amend the plan.
- Five-year deadline is 2025 for review of the County's comprehensive plan, *Envisioning the Isle*, adopted in 2020.
- Planning Commission began the Plan review process and the formed a stakeholder workgroup in early 2024.
- TischlerBise performed Growth Rate Scenario study in July 2024
- Developed Five Year Action Plan Benchmark Report.

Five Year Plan Review – What Goes In It

- Five Year Review is a look at how well the existing Plan is performing after its first five years.
- Changes could include updated population figures, growth projections, public facility and service conditions.
- Did not include changes to the Future Recommended Land Use Plan, Themes, Policies or Action Steps
- Not the same as a major update which usually occurs every 10-20 years and creates a new Plan.

Five Year Review Process

- Working group formed subcommittees to look over each chapter of the Plan for needed updates – June 2025
- Analyzed growth rate study findings – June 2025
- Assimilate all changes into single draft and reviewed as group – August 2025
- Present changes to community & BOS — We are here
- Assimilate feedback into final draft
- Schedule public hearings - October/November 2025

Chapter Review Highlights

Preserve	Shape	Connect
- Number of farms declined between 2017 and 2022 from 237 to 217 (11% decrease) - Average size of farm increased by 281 - Average farm size increase from 143 acres to 179 - Total acres remaining relatively stable (0.8% decrease, or 356 acres)	- Estimate population is 41,048 in July 2024, or an average rate of 0.6% per year - Still on track to grow on average of approximately 1% per year until 2040 - Growth rate scenario: already confirmed projected growth rate is sustainable - Current growth rate still less than the 1.9% average between 2017 and 2020	- Updated road project list - Added information on expansion of public transit options like e-bike

Chapter Review Highlights

Secure the Isle

- Sheriff's Office foresaw the need to establish future facility in Carrollton
- Crime rate still less than the national average
- Riverside Hospital will allow EMS to return to service sooner
- 18% increase in water customers over 2020
- Updated utility infrastructure lists (new water towers, water & sewer lines)
- Updated community energy section with Solar Energy Ordinance requirements and the Energy Task Force recommendations
- Updated Parks and Recreation facilities

Educate the Isle

- Noted improvements in graduation rates and standards of learning results
- Update enrollment data, spending per pupil, before and after school program information
- New information on workforce development programs, school safety improvements, and future facility needs

Chapter Review Highlights

Enhance the Isle

- Total number of jobs in the County decreased by 7% between 2018 and 2023
- Unemployment in 2024 still less than region and State at 3%
- 66% of workers commute outside the County to work
- Manufacturing, retail, & accommodations and food services, health care, and transportation and warehousing are top industries
- Revenue from tourism continues to increase
- Added Broadband expansion update
- Number of townhomes and apartments increased from 3.6% of total housing units in 2008 to 13.3% in 2023
- Median home value increase by 19% to \$333,600 in 2023 compared to \$280,600 in 2020 (ACS)
- Average sales price in County was \$415,000 in April 2025 (REIN)



Temporary Chairman Carroll opened the public hearing and invited any citizen comments,

Mr. Jonathan Hartley, 11192 Comet Road, stated that he previously served on the Citizens Advisory Committee, which collaborated with planning staff and the Planning Commission on updating the County's Comprehensive Plan. His primary areas of interest included rural county areas and transportation connectivity. Mr. Hartley referenced his submitted letter and notes as part of his remarks.

Mr. Hartley emphasized that change is inevitable, though it can be uncomfortable. He highlighted the long-term nature of comprehensive planning, noting that the current plan spans a twenty year horizon, while the 2025 update is a five-year revision prepared without the full resources used for the 2020 plan. He commended County staff for their extensive efforts in producing the update despite the small size of the planning team and their ongoing duties serving the public.

He expressed disagreement with a recent editorial in the local newspaper suggesting that the County revisit the plan, stating that the editorial failed to consider the planning process, legal requirements, and historical context of the update. Mr. Hartley noted the constraints imposed on the County by Dillon's Rule and emphasized Virginia's strong property rights framework, highlighting the influence of the Virginia Home Builders Association in shaping development regulations.

Regarding growth management, Mr. Hartley recalled opposition from community members historically referred to as the "Gate Closers Five" and noted that concerns about growth are longstanding in Isle of Wight County. He described the updated plan's approach to designating development areas, including that roughly 10.6% of the County's land is allocated for future development—primarily in the Windsor area—while the Newport Development District comprises only 3.8% of the County, leaving 90% of the County outside of intensive development zones.

Mr. Hartley advocated for a more detailed study of the rural areas, including understanding the viability of farm and forestry communities and identifying local resources such as the Blackwater River, the James River, and the former Walters railroad corridor, which could serve as a regional bicycle trail. He recommended that these studies be undertaken over the next five years to inform future planning, though he did not suggest modifying the current plan at this time.

He concluded by encouraging the Board to support and approve the updated Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Bill Butler, 6175 Rivers Ridge Lane, addressed the Commission regarding concerns about farmland and agricultural sustainability. He noted that the average farmer is 58 years old and that

the farming industry is facing a decline, referencing a recent news report on the topic.

Mr. Butler emphasized the importance of preserving farmland when considering future development. He cautioned that once farmland is developed, it is lost permanently and urged the Board to consider the long-term implications for future generations' food security. He highlighted advancements in agricultural technology, such as automated tractors, which may allow farmers to work more efficiently, but stressed that responsible land use planning remains critical.

He also commented on land use related to energy developments, stating that large-scale solar installations on farmland may be less efficient compared to smaller, more concentrated energy projects. Mr. Butler concluded by encouraging the Board to weigh long-term land preservation alongside short-term development incentives.

Mr. David Tucker, 6251 Old Stage Highway, Rushmere, spoke again regarding the Comprehensive Plan. He acknowledged the controversy surrounding the plan and admitted he had not reviewed it in detail due to the ongoing debates.

Mr. Tucker expressed skepticism about certain plan provisions, including broadband initiatives, comparisons of local crime rates to national averages, and projected increases in property values, which he noted could lead to higher taxes. He raised concerns about development in the Burwells Bay area, particularly traffic safety issues on Route 10 and Burwells Bay Road, citing blind spots and accident hazards.

He criticized the perceived priorities of developers, asserting that development tends to follow existing sewer infrastructure rather than community needs. Mr. Tucker questioned whether the plan reflects the interests of long-term residents and emphasized the need for careful consideration of local conditions and infrastructure before approving large-scale developments.

Temporary Chairman Carroll asked if any additional citizens wished to speak regarding the Comprehensive Plan. Hearing none, he closed the public hearing and invited the Commissioners to begin discussion.

Commissioner Boykin inquired about changes in the County's manufacturing and retail spaces since 2020.

Ms. Ring responded that this information was not included in the current plan but is available in the County's economic development annual report. She noted that the Economic Development Director, Kristi Sutphin, is scheduled to provide an update on the state of economic development in January.

Commissioner Johnson commended the staff for the extensive work on the plan but raised questions regarding the transportation and connectivity sections. He noted several tables and data points appeared outdated or incomplete, including the following items:

- Page 48–49: Status of bridge projects and IROD program updates, including Windsor.

- Page 69: Fire and rescue response numbers, currently from 2018. Page 72: Number of county employees, currently from 2018.
- Page 73: Solar farm approvals, noting the count increased from three to eleven, but the referenced year remained 2019; it should be updated to 2024.
- Page 82: Public engagement feedback on top county priorities, which was sourced from 2020.
- Page 92–94: Commuter data and employment statistics, with potential miscalculations or unclear descriptions of residents living and working in the county.
- Page 95: Farmland statistics, where the plan stated only 1% of the county is actively farmed; Mr. Johnson clarified that approximately 40% of the county's land is farmland.

Mr. Johnson also raised questions regarding the Policies and Actions table on pages 98–99, noting that the status of some actions had changed since the benchmark report and suggested that updates be reflected in the current draft.

Ms. Ring acknowledged the points raised, confirming she would review and update information as necessary, consult with staff on data discrepancies, and incorporate the most current figures were available.

Temporary Chairman Carroll asked if there were any additional comments. None were offered.

Commissioner Ford asked about the timing of the next Board meeting on December 11, 2025, and whether the plan could be submitted in time if approved at the current meeting.

Commissioner Shotwell made the motion to table consideration of the draft plan due to the absence of several commissioners. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ford.

The motion passed unanimously (6-0) with Commissioner Carroll, Commissioner Ford, Commissioner Boykin, Commissioner Shotwell, Commissioner Rawls, Commissioner Johnson voting in favor of the motion and no commissioner voting against the motion.

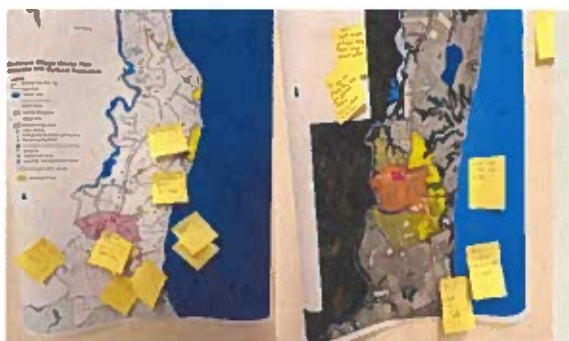
B. Rushmere Village Master Plan

Amy Ring, Community Development Director, gave the following presentation.



COMMUNITY SURVEY & MEETINGS

- Spring 2021 - Project kickoff meeting
- Spring 2022 - a community input survey was sent to owners of record and renters within the Rushmere Community Area to identify what citizens think future development should look like along with other community amenities, road improvements, and streetscape features. Out of 1,323 mailed surveys along with the ability to complete the survey online through the County's website, we received 243 total responses for a response rate of 18.37%. Responses showed an interest in trails park, streetscape and road improvements. Most respondents generally showed interest in small-scale, low-density development that reflects the county's rural character in both development type and architectural design.
- October 2023 - Sessions included a presentation of the community survey results followed by a "sticky Note" feedback exercise.



DRAFT VILLAGE MASTER PLAN DEVELOPMENT

- Incorporates feedback received from survey and community meetings.
- Includes background information on natural, historical and cultural resources in the study area.
- Focuses on form, design and placemaking policies to ensure future development reflects the community's design preferences.



RUSHMERE VILLAGE MASTER PLAN GOALS BASED ON COMMUNITY INPUT:

1. Regularly engage community members about a vision for Rushmere's future growth.
2. Identify opportunities in Rushmere to attract additional retail, personal services, and restaurants.
3. Improve the walkability of local streets, expand public spaces, and strengthen the community's relations to nearby parks and natural resources, historic sites, and surrounding neighborhoods.
4. Promote the preservation of local plans for stormwater storage and to prevent personal and property damage risks.
5. Preserve important conservation corridors to protect native vegetation and wildlife species for future generations.
6. Establish continuity of movement through a cohesive signage and streetscape improvement scheme.
7. Adopt design criteria for future residential development that supports the community's character.

IMPLEMENT THE GOALS OF THE PLAN THROUGH SPECIFIC ACTIONS:

Example: The County could increase **transparency** and further engage community members by taking the following steps:

- Set up a system where citizens could sign up for text updates on County activity.
- Increase social media presence and recruit followers in the community.

Example: The County and community could increase opportunities for additional retail, services and restaurants by taking the following steps:

- Establish a Village Green open space area with room for special events like markets and concerts.
- Develop additional public waterfront access at Tylers Beach and Burwells Bay to attract visitors and encourage expansion of local businesses.
- Develop Bradley Park to attract visitors to include a Community Center with room for special events such as Farmer's Market and cultural events.

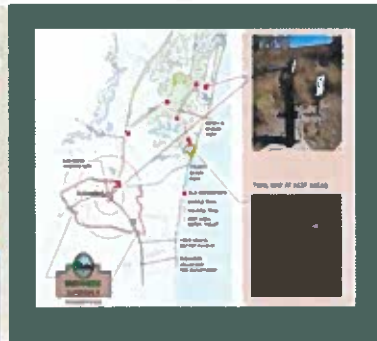
IMPLEMENT THE GOALS OF THE PLAN THROUGH SPECIFIC ACTIONS:

Example: The County and community could **establish an identity** for Rushmore through a cohesive **signage** and streetscape **improvement** scheme by taking the following steps:

- Install streetscape improvements (pavement treatment, lighting, landscaping) and drainage improvements for Route 10 and Trinch Lane.
- Install gateway treatment on Route 10 such as community identification signs with enhanced landscaping and artwork.
- Install identification and interpretative signage for the historical Warrascowick village site.
- Install identification and interpretative signage for the African American School.
- Install identification signage and markers for cemeteries and interpretative signage for prehistorical resources—fossils/geological/ancient human settlement at archeological resource sites.

COMMUNITY IDENTITY & FUTURE FORM:

- Logo concepts presented at October 2023 community meeting
- Examples of monument signs for community gateway areas
- Identifies intersection of Route 10 and Fort Huger Drive as instrumental to future commercial development within Village
- Assesses existing development pattern & visualizes what future development form could look like within 1/4 mile of intersection
- Concepts for road, trail and signage design
- Plan can be used as basis for future project proposals in the County & capital improvement plan
- Should be adopted as part of the Comprehensive Plan



DESIGN GUIDELINE RECOMMENDATIONS:

- County's existing Highway Corridor Overlay (HCO) District should be retained and expanded.
- Existing design criteria for nonresidential uses such as building materials, colors, site access, parking,
- loading area placement and amount of windows.
- Additional design criteria needed to implement the community's design preferences, such as gabled roofs and front porches.
 - Roofs shall be pitched—hipped roofs or gable and shall include overhangs a minimum of eight inches on the main building mass
 - Nonresidential buildings shall have a covered front porch a minimum of eight feet wide
 - The main customer entrance shall be prominent and face the main public street.
 - For multi-story nonresidential buildings, the windows on the ground floor shall be larger than the upper story windows.
 - Sign face background colors shall be neutral, earth-tone, historical.

Next Steps

- Planning Commission will hold a public hearing where members of the community are welcome to speak on the proposed Plan.
- Planning Commission will make a recommendation on the proposed Plan to the Board of Supervisors.
- The Board will also hold a public hearing on the draft Plan and decide whether to adopt the Village Master Plan as part of the County's overall Comprehensive Plan.

Temporary Chairman Carroll opened the public hearing and called for citizen comments.

Mr. Ronnie Brunt, 14466 Burwells Bay Road, addressed the Board regarding proposed public waterfront access at Tylers Beach and Burwells Bay. Mr. Brunt noted that he has lived in the area his

entire life and is currently President of the Burwells Bay Improvement Association. He expressed concerns about the potential impacts of adding public waterfront access, citing longstanding issues with mixing commercial and private property in the area. Mr. Brunt referenced historical conflicts and ongoing problems, including public disturbances, trespassing, and other nuisances, and emphasized that the local beaches under private management are patrolled and maintained to prevent such issues.

Mr. Brunt argued that public access could reintroduce problems previously mitigated over decades and questioned whether the project would serve the community effectively. He also noted survey results included in the Comprehensive Plan, highlighting that only 54% of respondents expressed support for little to no development, suggesting significant community hesitation.

He concluded that, based on historical experience and survey feedback, the community may not be ready for the proposed public waterfront project at Tyler's Beach.

Ms. Pat O'Berry Edwards-Eich, 2425 North Shore Drive, addressed the Commission in opposition to the proposed Rushmere Village Master Plan. She stated that she completed the survey and was among the majority of respondents who opposed development in the area.

Ms. Edwards-Eich expressed concerns that Rushmere Village could become similar to other large-scale developments in the County, including Carrollton, Benn's Grant, and north Suffolk. She highlighted existing traffic congestion along Route 10 and within Rushmere, noting that current traffic conditions already create challenges for residents commuting daily. She encouraged the Commissioners to observe traffic in the area during peak hours to understand the impact firsthand.

Ms. Edwards-Eich also raised concerns about infrastructure deficiencies, citing potholes and road conditions along Lawnes Neck Road, which she said are inadequate to support additional development. She emphasized the importance of preserving farmland, noting that three large farms would be directly impacted by the proposed development, potentially resulting in the permanent loss of agricultural land.

Ms. Edwards-Eich concluded by urging the Commission to reconsider the Rushmere Village Plan and allow the rural character of the area to remain intact, supporting only organized and controlled development consistent with the County's long-term planning goals.

Mr. Gary Parsons, 13246 Lawns Court, addressed the Commission regarding the proposed Rushmere Plan. He noted that although his mailing address is Smithfield, he resides within the section of Rushmere identified for low-density development in the Comprehensive Plan, specifically Ennisdale Farms, where parcels range from five to ten acres.

Mr. Parsons expressed concern over inconsistencies in the plan, citing slides that indicated low-density development for farm fields but also showed townhouses, apartments, and higher-density housing. He emphasized that the appeal of Rushmere lies in its open farm fields and wooded areas, and argued against major residential developments that could compromise the rural character of the community.

He raised several infrastructure concerns, particularly regarding Route 10 as the primary access route, noting limited alternative routes and potential traffic congestion if the area is further developed. He highlighted the capacity constraints of local schools, indicating that additional development would exacerbate overcrowding despite data or projections suggesting otherwise.

Mr. Parsons concluded by urging the Commission to carefully consider the impact of proposed developments on rural character, traffic infrastructure, and school capacity before approving new projects in Rushmere.

Ms. Tamara Brawley, 14637 Tyler's Beach Road, addressed the Commission regarding concerns about potential development near Tylers Beach. She stated that she and her family moved to the area in September of the previous year to enjoy rural living on a ten-acre property.

Ms. Brawley expressed concerns regarding ongoing trespassing on her property, noting that individuals from the public beach frequently cross private land, leave trash, and create other disturbances. She emphasized that existing signage is insufficient and called for increased measures to protect private property.

She also raised concerns about potential impacts of additional development in the area, including increased traffic and further disturbances. Ms. Brawley requested that future plans include more detailed information regarding proposed improvements for Tylers Beach rather than general statements to better understand how the area will be managed and protected.

Temporary Chairman Carroll closed the public hearing and called for discussion from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Boykin asked staff whether there had been any interest from developers in the Rushmere area.

Ms. Ring stated that there had been no development inquiries for Rushmere to date.

Commissioner Boykin then asked what the approval of the plan, if forwarded to the Board of Supervisors, would mean for Rushmere.

Ms. Ring explained that, even with an approved plan, actual development would still depend on a private developer choosing to submit an application, as the County cannot initiate development on its own.

Ms. Ring provided background on why the Rushmere Village Plan was initiated. She stated that when HRSD constructed the new sewer line between Surry and Smithfield, staff recognized that new utility infrastructure often increases future development pressure. The County chose to proactively prepare a small area plan rather than react to uncoordinated development proposals.

Rushmere had previously been designated as a village center in the 1990s, and a village center plan was completed in approximately 2005–2006. During the 2020 Comprehensive Plan process, Rushmere was the only village center where residents expressed interest in additional housing options and limited additional services. The plan under consideration does not propose land-use designation changes, but instead provides design guidelines illustrating what development could

look like if it occurs.

Ms. Ring emphasized that no development applications are currently under review for the area.

Commissioner Boykin asked for an update on Bradby Park, noting she was aware it had previously been included in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

Ms. Ring explained that Phase 1 of the Bradby Park Master Plan includes a basketball court, trail, parking, and an equipment shed. The Parks and Recreation Director presented this information during the September community meeting. Additional phases will be implemented as funding becomes available. A site plan was submitted several months prior and remains under review.

Commissioner Carroll noted that the draft plan references creating public access to Burwells Bay, which is privately owned. He asked if language could be revised to avoid suggesting that private property would be opened for public use.

Ms. Ring confirmed that the wording can be revised, and the public hearing process is intended to capture such corrections. Staff agreed to remove or revise the reference to Burwells Bay in the proposed revision.

Commissioner Carroll recommended that further discussion occur with the full Commission before any final action.

Commissioner Johnson raised concerns regarding traffic impacts and school capacity. He asked whether such analyses should be completed at this time.

Ms. Ring stated that the plan does not specify unit counts, densities, or recommended development intensity, and therefore traffic or school impact analyses were not applicable at this stage. The plan is conceptual rather than regulatory.

Commissioner Johnson provided several document-specific comments, including the following items:

- Page 9 Figure: The map contains colored shading but no legend explaining what the colors represent. A legend should be added.
- Page 13 Photograph: The plan includes a photo of an older structure in Rushmere. He requested identifying or labeling the structure for context.
- Page 29 Trails Figure: Symbols in the legend—specifically the zigzag line representing a walking trail—do not match the figure and should be clarified.
- Logo Study: The report references final logo selections, but the document does not clearly identify which logo was chosen, and the statement about the logo appearing on each page is incorrect.
- Appendix Photographs: The appendix contains meeting and feedback photos without introductory explanation. Commissioner Johnson recommended adding a description summarizing their purpose and origin.

Ms. Ring acknowledged the comments and noted that survey materials referenced on page five correspond to images and responses in the appendix. She agreed to further clarify the survey explanations and results.

Commissioner Carroll reminded the Commission that the document is a work in progress and represents only a guide forming part of an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan. He commended staff for proactively planning to manage development pressures related to the sewer line.

Ms. Ring stated that staff would incorporate the comments provided into a revised draft. If the Commission elected to table the matter, staff would prepare updated materials for consideration at a future meeting.

Commissioners discussed the meeting schedule and agreed that, given the abbreviated December calendar, final consideration should take place in early 2026, allowing adequate time for review.

Ms. Ring noted this public hearing was the final opportunity for public comment before the Planning Commission, but there would be a second public hearing before the Board of Supervisors prior to any adoption.

Commissioners confirmed that they were under no time constraints to move the plan forward and emphasized the goal of ensuring a thorough and thoughtful review.

Commissioner Shotwell moved to table this application which was seconded by Commissioner Ford.

The motion passed unanimously (6-0), with Commissioner Carroll, Commissioner Ford, Commissioner Boykin, Commissioner Shotwell, Commissioner Rawls, Commissioner Johnson voting in favor of the motion and no Commissioner voting against the motion.

8. Old Business

Amy Ring, Community Development Director, confirmed there are no items for old businesses.

9. New Business

A. County Attorney's Report

Bobby Jones, County Attorney, confirmed there are no items for the County Attorney's Report.

B. Planning Director's Report

1. Proposed Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Zoning Ordinance Requirements Discussion

Amy Ring, Director of Community Development, presented the most recent draft of the Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) regulations included in the agenda packet. She reminded the Commission that members toured the Dry Bridge Battery Energy Storage Facility in Chesterfield County during the October 30, 2025, annual retreat, where Dominion Energy staff and Chesterfield County staff provided on-site explanations and responded to questions.

Ms. Ring stated that County staff subsequently met with Dominion Energy representatives, Fire Rescue staff, the Building Official, and Dominion Energy's fire safety team to review the draft ordinance. As a result of that meeting, staff incorporated suggested revisions and addressed safety-related concerns.

She explained that redlined text reflects changes discussed at the Commission's September meeting, while blue-highlighted text reflects revisions resulting from the September 25 meeting with Dominion Energy and County staff. Ms. Ring noted that the revisions were limited in scope and primarily addressed terminology, setbacks, and fire safety standards.

Key revisions include such items as the following:

- Replacing the term "agency" with "association" to reflect proper nomenclature;
- Revising setback requirements to align with National Fire Protection Association guidance, including:
 - A minimum of 100 feet from security fencing,
 - An additional 250 feet from public roads and property lines, and
 - A minimum of 500 feet from existing dwellings at the time of Conditional Use Permit approval, with limited flexibility for reduction to 350 feet by the Board of Supervisors under specific conditions.
- Clarifying that fire suppression systems are required only for indoor battery storage installations, due to evolving safety technology and concerns regarding runoff.
- Removing language referencing "other practices as recommended by experts or local first responders," which was deemed overly vague.

Ms. Ring concluded that these revisions represented the final recommended changes and opened the floor for Commission comments.

Commissioner Boykin noted that several Commissioners who attended the retreat were absent and suggested tabling further discussion until all members could participate.

Ms. Ring responded that the item was being presented for informational purposes only and could be brought back for further discussion at the December meeting.

Commissioner Ford stated that he was unable to attend the retreat and had questions he preferred to reserve until the item was revisited with full Commission participation. He agreed that absent Commissioners may also have additional input.

Commissioner Boykin asked whether the regulations would be subject to the County's 2% cap on large-scale utilities.

Ms. Ring confirmed that the ordinance language applies the same requirements as utility-scale solar facilities, including the 2% cap.

Commissioner Johnson asked whether the County had already exceeded the cap.

Ms. Ring stated that the County is currently over the cap.

Commissioner Carroll clarified that the 2% cap applies only to prime farmland.

Commissioner Johnson commented favorably on the inclusion of a decommissioning plan requirement, noting the importance of ensuring that facilities are properly removed if they become obsolete. He referenced similar requirements in other localities and emphasized the need to protect the County from future financial liability.

Mr. Jones confirmed that similar decommissioning requirements already apply to solar facilities, including periodic updates to cost estimates and bonding requirements.

Ms. Ring confirmed that salvage value is not credited toward decommissioning costs and that the same approach would apply to battery storage facilities.

Following discussion, Commissioner Ford moved to place the draft BESS regulations on the agenda for the next meeting to allow additional review and comment. Commissioner Boykin seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Ring confirmed that the item would be added to the next meeting agenda.

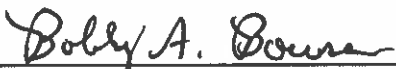
10. Closed Meeting

Bobby Jones confirmed there were no items for closed session

11. Adjournment

There being no further information to discuss, Temporary Chairman Carroll adjourned the meeting at 7:44 PM

Adopted this 27 day of Jan, 2026.



Bobby Boswell, Chairman
Isle of Wight County Planning Commission

Attest 

Amanda Landrus, Secretary