

You Spoke. We listened.

Let's partner to preserve our values!

Name of Group: Powhatan Park Neighborhood Watch Group

Date: March 15, 2011

in Attendance: 23

Attendee comments:

- Is this (budget crunch) because of federal money cuts?
- Is the Town Center beginning to show increases in sales?
- Does the federal government subsidize/match all the money that's collected through social services?
- I'm all in favor of public transportation, but I see buses with only three or four people. Is there a way to have a mini-bus or a smaller vehicle to cater to the public to make the system more efficient?
- I would gladly use public transportation and do away with my car, but I have no idea where I can catch the bus near where I live. Where can I access that information?
- Ten years ago, how many people were living in Hampton?
- How many employees does the city have 10 years ago and how many employees do we have now?
- How about schools? What about real estate values? For instance, I read at the paper that real estate went down 3% and in Newport News was about 10%, is Hampton insulated from this? If our real estate values have gone up, then those who lived here all their lives had been paying more.
- I have to pay for my garbage pick-up and water. Please explain how these services affect the budget? Who owns the garbage trucks?
- How do we know how pays the higher rate for garbage collections?
- If I don't put my recycling bin every week (because I put it in with my neighbor), would I still have to pay the higher rate for garbage collection?
- I really wanted to ask about schools? How many students, in terms of population, do we have? Are the new schools bringing in more people (new families, students from private schools)?
- I can't fathom that for 20 years, we didn't build any school and over one year, we spent \$100 million on a new school. Could we have spent this over several years instead?
- Is the city subject to an efficiency audit? If so, who does them? When was the last time it was done?
- When you close a school in a neighborhood, does that assist in the decline in the (housing) value of the neighborhood?
- At Mary Peake for instance, when the school was moved, what options are available for kids who are gifted? What happens to these children?
- Is it possible to get a second recycle bin?
- What's going to happen or what has happened to the property that Wythe Elementary was on?
- Where are you in the process with these town hall meetings? What's on the chopping block? If we were going to cut or make a decision tonight, what services will be cut?

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- We invest in technology so that in the future, we're more efficient and will be saving money in the future. Are we investing in technology that will get us there, get us ahead?
- I was surprised the other day that the Veteran's Administration in Riverdale is staffed by city employees. I went to an event in Williamsburg that they participated in and I was told by the staff/employees that they are City of Hampton employees. The office only faxes, etc. and does not offer any other services. The employees at that office claimed that they are hired and paid by the City of Hampton.
- What's happening to the gift cards that were going to be given to the city employees?
- So, what ended up happening to that \$3 million surplus?
- I want to know if there's a specific program or center where senior citizens can go. If there is one that caters to senior citizens, how many seniors are using the senior center and taking advantage of programs catered to senior citizens? How do these senior citizens get to that senior center? If I do decide to go, then I'd have to take a several buses just to get there. Perhaps we can put a senior center where it's both visible and accessible?
- I think she was talking about the accessibility of it (senior center). If you're a senior citizen living in Fox Hill and your mode of transportation is the HRT, it would be difficult to get to the senior center on Kecoughtan.
- Over the years, the city has made investments in businesses. Some of them went belly-up. Can we reuse these, like the Gateway Communications? Use it say for a technology school? A technology school could even feed back into the city and would benefit us greatly.
- Technology... could that be incorporated (in classes) at Thomas Nelson?
- Could we incorporate technology classes in high schools?
- What is Hampton doing for its homeless citizens? Where does someone go if they lose their house? I don't think people choose to be homeless. I would like to know what the city does for the homeless. There are vacant buildings. Could something be done? Could these buildings be used as a homeless shelter?
- I do a lot of work at the VA. The problem with the homeless getting into facilities is that there are many stipulations that disqualify most of them, like you cannot have had a drink in the last week, etc.
- I work a couple of times and stay overnight at some of the churches. I've talked with a lot of the homeless. Many of them have very good jobs and most of them prefer not to have a home. They don't want to have responsibilities. They go to the churches to get a meal and a place to sleep and then, go to their jobs in the morning.
- I'm talking about the homeless that do not have jobs. I think people who have jobs shouldn't be at homeless shelters. We are growing to become a society of gimmicks. Some are occupying a space that was intended for a "real" homeless person, instead of someone who has a job but doesn't want the responsibilities.
- Some of these people do have jobs but they cannot have money ahead to put down payments for an apartment or to pay for utilities. I agree that we need these stipulations to protect others.
- My suggestion is that, maybe, we can get in contact with the Mayor of Norfolk, since I heard that they don't have homeless in Norfolk.

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- I think we ought to rely on professionals. Some of them choose to be homeless. Others don't and those (who don't) rely on you to take care of them. We need to offer services to these people.
- We have two channels on TV, why don't you use those channels to address these issues. Put your budget on that screen. Use these channels to enlighten the citizens about what you're doing and where you're heading.
- Show of hands: How many people watch Channel 47: 4 people
- That (using Channel 47 to address issues) brings the technology challenge again. People should be able to call into a computer and get some responses.
- I've enjoyed this chat very much. Thank you.
- Will you be at another location, conducting budget chats?
- Will you make a promise that Fort Monroe never builds/turns into a gated community?
- The other people in the Committee/Board that discusses the future use of Fort Monroe, do they have a connection to or at least an interest in Hampton?
- I've read in the Daily Press that Hampton and Newport News are talking about merging their services. Is this true? Could you elaborate on this issue? Do you think a merging of services will actually happen?
- Thank you for a wonderful presentation.

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