

COUNTY OF HENRICO, VIRGINIA
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
SPECIAL MEETING
August 2, 2019

The Henrico County Board of Supervisors convened a special meeting on Friday, August 2, 2019, at 9:00 a.m., in the front parking lot of the Administration Building, Henrico County Government Center, Parham and Hungary Spring Roads, Henrico, Virginia.

Members of the Board Present:

Tyrone E. Nelson, Chairman, Varina District
Patricia S. O'Bannon, Tuckahoe District
Daniel J. Schmitt, Brookland District
Frank J. Thornton, Fairfield District

Member of the Board Absent:

Thomas M. Branin, Vice Chairman, Three Chopt District

Other Officials Present:

John A. Vithoulkas, County Manager
Barry R. Lawrence, CMC, Assistant to the County Manager/Clerk to the Board
Tanya B. Harding, CMC, Deputy Clerk/Administrative Assistant
W. Brandon Hinton, Deputy County Manager for Administration
Randall R. Silber, Deputy County Manager for Community Development
Benjamin A. Sheppard, Director of Public Relations & Media Services
Anthony J. Romanello, Executive Director, Economic Development
Edward N. (Ned) Smither, Jr., Director of Finance
Ralph J. (Joe) Emerson, Jr., Director of Planning
Edwin C. (Neil) Luther, Director of Recreation and Parks
Dawn H. Miller, Recreation Tourism Specialist, Recreation and Parks
Jason Schilling, Sports Tourism Coordinator, Recreation and Parks
John F. (Jack) Berry, President and Chief Executive Officer, Richmond Region Tourism
Katherine O'Donnell, Executive Vice President, Richmond Region Tourism
Jerrine Lee, Sports Development Manager, Richmond Region Tourism
J.C. Poma, Sports Development Manager, Richmond Region Tourism
Thurgood O. Ampey, Vice Chairman, Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission
Officer Zachary Gallatin, Police Division
Chris Suarez Rojas, *Richmond Times-Dispatch*

Mr. Nelson called the meeting to order at 9:13 a.m., after the Board of Supervisors and other officials boarded a minibus for a tour of the Rocky Mount Event Center, 285 NE Main Street, Rocky Mount, North Carolina. Mr. Vithoulkas announced there would be short presentations from Richmond Region Tourism (RRT) and Henrico County staff while the Board was in transit to Rocky Mount.

The meeting recessed at 9:14 a.m. and reconvened at 9:55 a.m.

Mr. Vithoulkas referred to a recent *Richmond Times-Dispatch* editorial that spoke to the importance of tourism to the local economy. He recognized Mr. Berry, who pointed out sports tourism is lucrative but extremely competitive. Mr. Berry introduced the members of his staff who were present and recognized Ms. O'Donnell, who cited sports tourism statistics to highlight the importance of tourism to the Richmond region. Ms. O'Donnell identified major athletic events that are held in Henrico and noted NASCAR events lead the region in terms of hotel occupancy. Ms. O'Donnell further noted Henrico has approximately one-half of the hotel rooms in the region. She showed a video profiling the variety of sporting events hosted within the region that attract tourists. Following the video, Ms. O'Donnell referred to RRT's work with Mr. Schilling and the County's Division of Recreation and Parks.

At Mr. Vithoulkas' request, Ms. O'Donnell explained that RRT is funded largely through local transient occupancy tax revenue and a flat membership fee paid by some of the smaller jurisdictions. She also addressed incentives and partnerships the organization uses to attract events to the region and expressed concern that the Richmond region is losing tourism business to other regions that have a large indoor sports facility. A master plan developed by RRT has identified the need for a year-round indoor facility in Henrico. Ms. O'Donnell recognized Mr. Schilling, who discussed the 13 different sports that could be accommodated by this facility, including basketball and volleyball, and the growing demand for indoor athletic courts based on market research and client interest. Mr. Schilling recognized Ms. Lee, who elaborated on sports other than basketball and volleyball that draw tournaments to an indoor facility, such as cheering, dance, gymnastics, judo, karate, chess, scrabble, and pickleball. Ms. Lee also emphasized that Henrico and the Richmond region are currently missing out on the LGBTQ sports market and athletic events drawing more diverse participants and audiences due to the County's lack of suitable indoor facilities.

Ms. O'Donnell reiterated the need for, and benefits of, an indoor sports facility in Henrico. In response to a question from Mrs. O'Bannon, Ms. O'Donnell explained why the Richmond Convention Center is not a cost-effective option for hosting sports tournaments and events. She and Mr. Poma identified for Mr. Nelson the limited catalogue of indoor sports facility options in the region and their limitations. Ms. O'Donnell explained for Mr. Suarez Rojas how an indoor facility in Henrico would complement the proposed replacement facility for the Richmond Coliseum.

Mr. Luther played a video produced by the Department of Public Relations & Media Services spotlighting tourism activity in Henrico. He noted how Henrico works collaboratively with RRT on sports tourism. Mr. Luther pointed out that Mrs. Miller and Mr. Schilling were hired by the Division of Recreation and Parks several years ago to work with RRT in promoting sports tourism in Henrico. Last year, Henrico hosted 180 tournaments that had a local economic impact of approximately \$54 million. Because of limited indoor capacity, Henrico lost about \$57 million in local economic impact, including \$33 million in lost direct spending and 43,000 lost hotel nights. Mr. Luther identified and described the following indoor sports facilities that have recently opened or will be opening soon: Spooky Nook Sports, Lancaster, Pennsylvania; Boo Williams Sportsplex, Hampton, Virginia; Virginia Beach Sports Center, Virginia Beach, Virginia; The St. James Sports, Wellness and Entertainment Complex, Springfield, Virginia; and Rocky Mount Event Center, Rocky Mount, North Carolina. He suggested a facility in Henrico could be used for local sports programs Monday through Thursday and for tournaments on weekends and holidays.

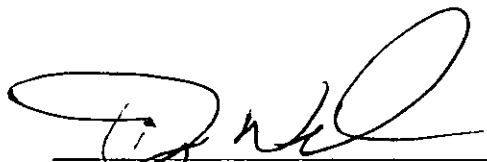
Mr. Luther concluded his portion of the presentation by recapping the Public-Private Education and Infrastructure Act (PPEA) process the County initiated in 2018 to solicit proposals for an indoor facility in Henrico. The County received six conceptual proposals and a working group appointed by Mr. Vithoulkas recommended two of these for consideration by the Board. The short-listed proposals were presented to the Board at its December 11, 2018, regular meeting. Mr. Vithoulkas noted he requested that the working group obtain more information regarding the two proposals and report back to him in February of this year. Although Richmond International Raceway (RIR) was the preferred location for an indoor sports facility, the County and RIR were unable to reach an agreement. Mr. Vithoulkas informed the Board that staff will bring forward an item for the Board's consideration at its August 13 meeting authorizing staff to seek detailed proposals from the six entities that previously submitted conceptual proposals. This time, the proposers will be asked to identify a location in which they have a property interest for the facility. The plan is for staff to move forward so the Board can make a decision on the proposals at its October 22 meeting.

The Board recessed at 10:48 a.m. and reconvened at 11:13 a.m.

Mr. Vithoulkas recognized Mr. Smither and Mr. Romanello and suggested Henrico County Economic Development Authority revenue bonds could be used as a funding source for the proposed indoor sports facility. He revisited the timeframe and steps for soliciting proposals that include a proposed location for the facility. Mr. Vithoulkas reminded the Board of the advantages to Henrico taxpayers of entering into an agreement with a private operator rather than having the County operate the facility.

The Board recessed at 11:20 a.m. and departed the minibus at 11:38 a.m. for a tour of the Rocky Mount Event Center. Mrs. Miller introduced the Center's Marketing Manager, Ashley Pittman, and its Office Manager, Connie Durojaiye. Ms. Pittman and Ms. Durojaiye conducted a tour of the facility. Tim Foster, Deputy County Manager for Community Operations, joined the group at the Center for the tour, which included a behind-the-scenes look at the facility's concession stand, Twin County Hall of Fame, meeting and banquet rooms, fieldhouse and locker rooms, removable flooring and bleacher storage area, family entertainment center, party rooms, and observation room. The tour concluded at 12:40 p.m., and the minibus departed the facility at 12:45 p.m. The minibus arrived at Gardner's Barbecue, 1331 N. Wesleyan Boulevard, at 12:55 p.m., where the group attending the tour had lunch. The minibus departed Gardner's at 1:34 p.m. and arrived at the Henrico County Government Center at 3:41 p.m.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:41 p.m.



Chairman, Board of Supervisors
Henrico County, Virginia