

Poll: Moyock prefers rural lifestyle

By Cindy Beamon
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MOYOCK — If the choice was between stars and street lights, Moyock residents would prefer stars.

About 34 residents were polled recently by county planners seeking to identify what the community wants for its future. The responses from Monday's meeting at Moyock United Methodist Church and an online survey will be analyzed by county planners before they create a small area plan for Moyock. The plan will be used to help guide county decisions for development over the next five to 10 years.

If the first survey is an indication of what the rest of Moyock residents want, the night sky wins six-to-one over a busier landscape with lighted parking lots and neighborhoods.

The group's preference for a rural lifestyle emerged from their answers to several other questions.

In a choice between fresh cut grass and honeysuckle versus the smell of asphalt, food and coffee, 76 percent of the group liked being closer to nature.

Crickets, the rustle of leaves, and rain trumped with equal enthusiasm the hustle and bustle of a busier community.

But the poll also revealed some contrasts.

Residents polled want a community recreation center, better senior services, more convenient shopping and a variety of housing options besides single-family homes.

What type of diverse housing they desire is a little less clear.

One poll question indicated the group wanted more town homes. However, when asked to choose from four pictures of different types of housing, most from Monday's group chose a single-family modular home over town homes.

Currituck Senior Planner Holly White said the conflict is not unusual. Finding out what people mean when they say they want diversified housing is one reason she asked the question two different ways.

She expects to have the survey on the county's website in the coming week. The county's planning staff plans to use the results to draft a small area plan by late summer. After a presentation to the public, Currituck commissioners are expected to consider adopting the plan in November.

After Monday's meeting, a few participants had mixed feelings about the results.

Vic Ramsey, member of a 14-member panel appointed to preview the issues, said he hopes the community will think beyond their immediate desire to preserve Moyock's rural atmosphere.

Development is inevitable and “we need to prepare for growth,” he said.

Mike Hall, another member of the Moyock Small Area Plan Stakeholders Committee, said he’s hoping a larger sampling of Moyock will participate in the survey.

Getting those responses may be a challenge based on county demographics. Almost 72 percent of residents commute out of state to work and often identify more with Virginia than Moyock.

Even among Monday’s more established residents, three out of four admitted they do most of their shopping in Virginia.

Hall said he wants more of Moyock’s younger residents to participate in the survey since the county’s median age is 38.

He was pleased that the poll among older residents still seemed mindful of the needs of younger residents. The survey indicated that education was a top priority and that a mix of recreational facilities — including ball fields and walking paths — were needed.

He wanted to see what picture of housing younger participants would choose. Hall said more affordable housing is needed to keep young people from leaving the community.

“(Young people) would commute like we do if they had affordable housing,” said Hall.

Longtime Moyock resident Kim Huckoby also expressed interest in expanding the mix of housing options in Moyock. She said the county may need to loosen regulations to encourage the variety of housing that’s been talked about for years but never materialized.

“Right now, we are just a place people pass through,” said Huckoby.