

Currituck eyes options for Moyock growth

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© The Daily Advance

Monday, November 26, 2012

CURRITUCK — Currituck officials are looking back as well as ahead to create a development strategy for Moyock.

Looking back, some commissioners want to review a plan for turning Moyock into a center for retail and entertainment.

The county first considered the idea in 2005 when music entertainer Randy Parton eyed Currituck as music theater mega-site. The deal fizzled, fortunately for Currituck, said Commissioner Paul O'Neal. Roanoke Rapids, instead, was chosen and is now saddled with a \$21 million debt after the music theater project went sour.

However, Commissioner John Rorer said the county's study of Moyock as a possible entertainment and retail center may still have some merit.

He asked county planners to dust off the plan and see if it may offer some good suggestions for the new Small Area Plan.

In the next five months, the county will be gathering ideas from the community before forming a Small Area Plan for Moyock. The plan will guide future decisions about Moyock.

A public input session is planned for Dec. 13 at Moyock Middle School at 7 p.m.

"We are setting up to do a lot of listening that night," said county Planner Holly White.

The county will be hosting a series of meetings before county planners start writing the plan, said White. A draft plan should be ready by mid-summer and a final plan ready for commissioners to consider in November 2013, she said.

The process began with an informational meeting and survey in September. Survey results indicated residents like Moyock's small-town, rural atmosphere and friendly people. What they didn't like is traffic in summer, Internet sweepstakes cafes and the community's appearance.

In the coming months, the county's aim is to get more input from residents of all age groups, said White.

According to census data, families make up a major portion of Moyock's population.

Overall in Currituck, youth ages 15 to 24 are the county's largest single population group, in age breakdowns of every five years. Residents ages 45 to 49 make up the largest adult population group throughout the county.

In Moyock, the largest single population group is also adults ages 45 to 49, closely followed by residents up to five years older and younger. The next largest population group ranges from ages 10 to 14, followed closely by youth five years older and five years younger.

At a work session last week, commissioners had several ideas of what they wanted for Moyock's future.

O'Neal said he'd like for the plan to include more commercially zoned properties off Caratoke Highway. Restaurants and retail stores may like the visibility, but some other businesses may prefer less "high dollar" options, said O'Neal. The county needs to consider developing a commerce park in Moyock to attract businesses looking to escape higher taxes in Virginia Beach and Chesapeake, Va., he said.

Marion Gilbert said the county needs to start looking at prime locations for a park, other than 20 acres owned by the county near Shingle Landing. She said residents have already "spoken loud and clear" about a need for more recreational facilities.

Commissioner-elect Kevin McCord said more practice fields are needed for children involved in the county's parks and recreation program. O'Neal added that the Shingle Landing site could be converted easily into more fields for outdoor sports.