



Dinwiddie County Supervisors gave their opinions on how Dinwiddie will look in the future, after hearing from the county department heads last week.

Supervisors opine on county's future

By Ben Page

What's next for Dinwiddie County?

The County Administrator Kevin Massengill and the Division Chiefs under him spent some quality time listening to their new supervisors at the second part of a two day event to set Dinwiddie County's goals and priorities.

A six hour presentation from the department heads brought board

members up to speed on county operations and the following evening the local leaders discussed what needs to change.

To kick off the discussion, Massengill observed that all the board members had talked to many citizens while campaigning and asked "Looking twelve months from now what do you wish to accomplish and then at the end of your four year

term what will the citizens say that you've accomplished?"

CHAVIS

Bill Chavis, of the third district, was the first to speak. His first concern, which he relayed directly from the citizens, was wasteful spending in the county. "Yesterday opened my eyes a little bit about how it operates," he did admit.

Taxes and the schools'

budget crisis are going to be a challenge to overcome. "Nobody wants to raise taxes."

Some other important points on the Chavis agenda; trash in his district in particular and the change of the Petersburg addresses in Sutherland.

LEE

Dan Lee of the fourth district also listed his ideas in no particular

Continued on page 5

Supervisors opine

Continued from page 1

order. "I want to support a school system that is financially stable and academically challenging." Lee argued for economic development through overlay districts in certain areas of the county and through the Sports Complex.

Long range, he addressed the obvious need of expanding water and sewer capacity. "People are like grass, they follow sewer lines," he said quoting an adage about growth and development. He also touched on public safety and making improvements to trash.

"There needs to be an easy way to recycle," he expressed on the issue of trash. "Make recycling easy or make dumping trash expensive. There are some ways to get people to do things." He cited Prince George, where citizens pay to dump trash but not recycle, as a good example of how to handle waste management.

Also like Prince George, Lee hoped to see a local farmer's market.

EBRON-BONNER

The newly reshaped fifth district in the northern end is home to Brenda Ebron-Bonner, who was also full of thoughts. From the citizens, "number one was taxes." Maintaining a good school system while keeping down taxes for those on a fixed income was a concern she expressed.

"We have so many vacant properties in Dinwiddie," she said arguing that such buildings are a hazard to the public.

A matter she spoke about at length was the county young people and their risk of getting into trouble. "During the summer you see the youth just walking," she said. "They've said that they want something to do."

Some long range goals were recreation programs to that end such as swimming, skating, summer camps and cultural programs.

She also discussed "keeping tax dollars in the county," and finding ways to ensure the safety of 200 mental health patients who will be released into group

homes in the area when the training center at Central State closes in 2014.

MOORE

"I feel like I've got some pretty big shoes to fill," former planning commissioner Mark Moore said in tribute to Donald Haraway who held the seat before him. Moore mentioned taxes and was the first to bring up that most employee's salaries have not increased in recent years.

Remembering how the last reassessment hit citizens "like a double whammy," Moore insisted that "these are things we need to evaluate," and put emphasis on fiscal responsibility.

"It's the citizens dollar that we're spending," he reminded. Public safety, schools and recreation were also the list. "I probably heard the road to nowhere 1,000 times," he said; "it's now leading to somewhere."

Economic development through the pursuit of grants and the development of water and sewer was a highlight.

Finally Moore pointed out that consideration is needed in deciding what to do about Rohoic Elementary school. "It's up to us."

MOODY

Chairman Harrison Moody was the last to share his thoughts. "There's a lot of unrest in the County," he said thoughtfully, "a lot of people without jobs."

Moody suggested he too would support a farmer's market and put emphasis on tourism. "We're not really monopolizing on that point."

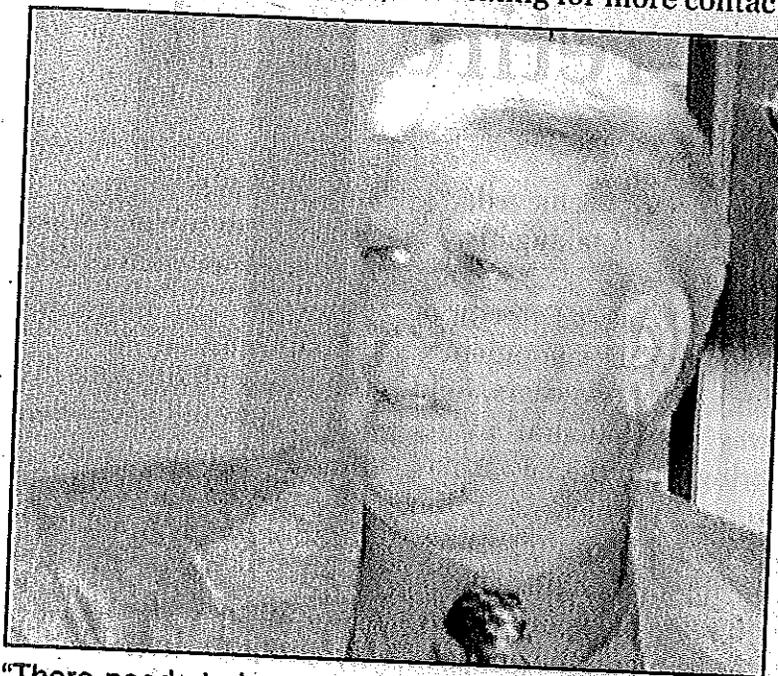
Water and sewer will be key in the future and the tax base needs to be expanded to lessen burden on the citizens. "I think we need a fair assessment," he continued, calling firm Wampler Eanes "accessible."

All the board members said their need is to have better communication with the citizens. "Instead of criticizing what's going on, let's ask questions," Chavis suggested. We need to get the word out about the positive things in the county, Moore argued.

'upply

Possibilities supervisors suggested included more town hall meetings, improvements to the County website and the printing of a regular newsletter to be mailed to every citizen.

Another topic all agreed on was contacting more faith based or community groups to help out in social and emergency situations. "Sometimes our church— we look for things to help and it's like we really don't know what to do," Dan Lee said, advocating for more contact.



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aim can help.



Monday-Saturday

10am-5pm & by appt.

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