

Public Hearings - Somerset County

1988

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CRITICAL AREAS COMMISSION

SOMERSET COUNTY

March 24, 1988

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PROCEEDINGS

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Commission Panel Hearing, March 24, 1988, Somerset County, Maryland.

MR. HICKELNESS: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Tonight is a public hearing conducted by a sub-panel of your Chesapeake Bay's Critical Areas Commission. Attending this evening's public hearing are Dr. Sheppard Krech, a member of the Commission from Talbot County, Mr. Russell Blake, member of the Commission from Pocomoke City, and my name is Ron Hickelnell, member of the Commission representing Baltimore County.

The purpose of this evening's hearing is to hear public comments on Somerset County's Critical Areas Program as required under Section 8-1809 of the Critical Areas Law.

The Commission, following the public hearing, will review the program submitted by Somerset County and make a decision upon that program within 40 days of the date.

Perceiving we do not have a Court Reporter with

1 us, rather we're using a tape recorder, we'd like you to  
2 make sure that you speak loudly enough so that the record  
3 can be kept of this evening's hearing.

4 That record will be available to the Commission  
5 members to help us render a decision on the plan  
6 submitted to us. Further, the record will be kept open  
7 for one week after this evening's hearing, for any  
8 additional written testimony, and those statements mailed  
9 to the Chairman of the Commission, Judge Solomon Lisp,  
10 Chesapeake Bay's Critical Areas Commission, 580 Taylor  
11 Avenue, B-4, Annapolis, Maryland 21401.

12 The complete text of public record will be kept  
13 by the Commission at it's office for public review.

14 With us this evening is Mr. Charles Massey,  
15 County Administrator for Somerset County, and also Mr.  
16 Ron Adkins, Planning Director for Somerset.

17 Once again, this evening's meeting is for the  
18 sole purpose of providing for testimony on Somerset  
19 County's Critical Areas Commission.

20 I'd like to introduce Mr. Adkins again, for a  
21 presentation on the plan submitted to the Commission.

22 MR. ADKINS: What we would like to do tonight is

1 to visually show you as well as -- -- -- the -- -- --  
2 Bob Pearson who draws the maps for our Critical Area  
3 Program. He is from Philadelphia, he works with the firm  
4 -- -- -- , and they're going to ask Bob to give you  
5 a...just a little bit of a visual tour -- -- Critical  
6 Areas of our County, and to just give a very quick and --  
7 explanation of a little bit of our program, and then  
8 we'll let you, -- --

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: OK, thanks, Ron. Panel  
10 members, I'd like to take you very quickly through some -  
11 - of the County, to reinforce some of the scenes you've  
12 seen today, the forestry areas in the County, the farming  
13 areas in the County, examples of intense development,  
14 limited development, and the resource conservation areas,  
15 and then finishing up with some examples of water  
16 dependent usage that are typical in the County.

17 In the intensely developed areas, are  
18 characterized mainly by, not in the County so much as in  
19 the Town of Princess Anne and Crisfield. This is a shot  
20 of the very intense use on the waterfront in Crisfield.

21 In....there are several areas, very small areas,  
22 in the County of intensely developed use, but they are a

1 very, very small percentage of the total County.

2 Limited development areas, there are more of  
3 these, and they are characterized by low density  
4 development along the waterfront, new subdivisions, more  
5 traditional housing along country roads in the back yard  
6 zones of the water.

7 And the resource.....resource conservation  
8 areas, farmlands with croplands that go pretty close to  
9 the water's edge, -- industries, -- -- . And this  
10 is the forestry use. The forestry....there's an active  
11 forestry industry in the county. It's....the forestry  
12 covering the County is less than that of the agriculture.  
13 It's....many of the forestry....forested areas are owned  
14 by large lumbering companies, or by private, smaller  
15 private land owners who depend on them for income, and  
16 they are typically found in low lying areas in the  
17 Critical Areas.

18 This is a picture from the ground of that same  
19 plot which is the -- after the harvest and just as it  
20 is getting replanted again. This is a picture of the  
21 open tidal marshes outside the land fill portion of the  
22 Critical Area. In the end, the tidal meanders.

1           And examples of where the....the bay has come in  
2 and reclaimed....beginning to reclaim part of areas that  
3 were previously farmed for....or that will turn into  
4 wetlands eventually.

5           So you can see that the....there are broad open  
6 expanses of farm lands, of forestry, of wetlands that  
7 characterizes nearly all of the Critical Areas of  
8 Somerset County.

9           And these are some examples now of water  
10 dependent usage. Scattered, small scaled, here's a large  
11 -- around Crisfield. Places where -- -- and some  
12 places -- -- . Industrial use in the Critical  
13 Area. Places where the soft shell crabs are watched  
14 before they are taken to market. It's the same family  
15 business shown from in the air.

16           And that's it, that's, I think you'll find  
17 consistent with the characters, the land that you saw  
18 today on your tour, and again it emphasizes the very  
19 rural nature of the Critical Areas as reflected in the  
20 classifications that we've given to them in the program.

21           I don't want to say too much about the program.  
22 As consultants to the Town and working with the technical

1 advisory committee that the Town has had, we have tried  
2 as best we can to stick to the spirit of the criteria,  
3 and the letter of the criteria. We had some pretty good  
4 discussion in committee about which way things should go,  
5 but when we came down here, we tightened, closed ranks  
6 and came together with a program that we think  
7 satisfactorily meets the intent of the legislation and  
8 the criteria as established by the Critical Areas  
9 Commission.

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Like to call -- --

11 MR. LESSER: My name is Cyrus Lesser, I'm  
12 employed by the Maryland Department of Agriculture, and  
13 I'm an entomologist with that Department assigned to the  
14 -- Control, and part of my responsibilities are  
15 the -- Control in Somerset County. One of the  
16 problems that we have in Somerset County, as you  
17 residents know, is the mosquito problem. It does impact  
18 the public health, as well as the comfort of the citizens  
19 of the County and the surrounding area, and most of our  
20 activities do occur within the Critical Areas of Somerset  
21 County.

22 I have studied the plan for the Critical Areas



1 Program in Somerset County, and I cannot find any mention  
2 of mosquito control activities within the County, and  
3 this is consistent with other county plans that we have  
4 reviewed. Evidently, mosquito control, even though it  
5 does occur quite significantly in the Critical Areas of  
6 the State, it is not mentioned in any plan that we have  
7 come across yet.

8 We are concerned in my Department about future  
9 ramifications of Critical Areas regulations that may  
10 impact our program, and prohibit us from providing the  
11 best control that we possibly can.

12 One of the areas in Somerset County in  
13 particular that we have concerns with is the Irish Grove  
14 Natural Heritage Area. Again, we are not clear on the  
15 regulations which will govern activities within a  
16 Heritage Area, we have tried to obtain information from  
17 the Department of Natural Resources and other parties who  
18 are involved in this program; however, it does seem that  
19 at the present time, regulations and what will constitute  
20 legitimate activities in Heritage areas is unclear.

21 And we just want to state that the problem that  
22 we have in the Irish Grove Heritage Area will impact, or

1 does impact a considerable portion of the County's  
2 population, in that the mosquito's which breed on Irish  
3 Grove Natural Heritage Area do not stay within the  
4 Heritage Area as they become adults. They have a very  
5 great flight range of up to 20 miles or more, depending  
6 upon wind conditions, and the entire area of Crisfield  
7 and beyond is within the easy flight range of these  
8 mosquitoes.

9           And we do at the present time have an active  
10 program of chemical control of these mosquitoes. We  
11 would at some point in the future like to get away from  
12 chemical control as this is our long range goal, is to  
13 install water management which has been developed through  
14 departments of natural resources interacting with the  
15 department of agriculture, and several federal agencies,  
16 to design a water management program which does not drain  
17 the march, it enhances the marsh for a wide variety of  
18 wildlife, but it does control mosquitoes without the use  
19 of insecticides, and we just wanted to bring this to the  
20 attention of the Commission, that this is a potential  
21 problem, we think particularly in the Heritage Area, and  
22 possibly in other areas of the Critical Areas of the

1 County.

2 That's all I wanted to say. Thank you.

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you. The second --  
4 speaker this evening is Mr. Charles Massey, the County  
5 Administrator. Mr. Massey?

6 MR. MASSEY: Mr. Chairman, and members of the  
7 Chesapeake Bay Critical Areas Commission, we appreciate  
8 your being here tonight to receive any comments that any  
9 citizen may offer, and hopefully you will take them back  
10 and discuss them as a possible format of the  
11 initial....of the final program.

12 On behalf of the Board of County Commissioners  
13 for Somerset County, I offer the following statement:

14 'The Somerset County Chesapeake Bay Critical  
15 Area Program was officially submitted to the Critical  
16 Area Commission in early March of this year. It is the  
17 position of the Board of County Commissioners that the  
18 program meet or exceed the requirements, the required  
19 elements of a local program as defined in Section 8-1808C  
20 of the Critical Area Law, sub-title 18, and the specific  
21 directive provided in the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area  
22 Criteria, 14....1501 and others.

1           As such, the County looks forward to a  
2 favorable review of the program by the Chesapeake Bay  
3 Critical Area Commission.

4           The County also reminds the members present that  
5 adequate time must be provided to the County so that the  
6 local program can be adopted in a legal fashion, prior to  
7 June 11, 1988. Thank you.'

8           UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you -- --  
9 I thank you for coming out this evening.

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