



**DRAFT**  
**TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Work Session**  
**November 20, 2025**  
**Immediately Following the Regular Meeting**

At 8:16 p.m., Mayor Adam Charney, having established a quorum, called to order the Work Session of the Cape Charles Town Council. In addition to Mayor Charney, in attendance were Vice Mayor Buchholz, Councilmen Butta, Grossman and Newman, and Councilwomen Ashworth and Holloway. Staff in attendance were Town Manager Rick Keuroglan, Assistant to the Town Manager Pam Endlein and Town Clerk Libby Hume.

**WORK SESSION ORDER OF BUSINESS:**

**A. *Community Strategic Planning Survey Questions***

Town Manager Rick Keuroglan opened the discussion with an overview of his process. He met with both the Historic District Civic League and Bay Creek residents and received their feedback related to the survey and questions. He shared that many residents expressed frustration with prior yes/no questions, indicating they felt simplistic and unhelpful in capturing meaningful information.

Council emphasized the importance of differentiating between the survey and the strategic planning process itself. While the survey gathered community sentiment, the strategic plan was shaped through a broader, more formal process involving workshops with Council, Planning Commission, Historic District Review Board, staff, and representatives from various stakeholder groups. It was noted that the last comprehensive strategic planning session took place several years ago and that the Town is due for another full workshop.

Council discussed last year's issue where 70 responses were discarded due to incomplete identification information. Councilman Grossman stressed the need for clear instructions and early prompts requiring necessary fields. Council agreed that identification fields should be located at the beginning of the survey, with required fields preventing incomplete submissions. Rick Keuroglan also suggested adding a clear disclosure that personal information was not shared and that results were published anonymously.

Council debated how to categorize residents to better analyze data. Some members supported adding neighborhood-level identification to distinguish Historic District, Bay Creek North, and Bay Creek South responses. Others were concerned about perceptions of dividing the Town. Council agreed that these categories should be optional and would be used only for internal data analysis. Council also emphasized encouraging business owners to complete the survey regardless of residence, noting their unique perspective on economic activity in town.

Council reviewed proposed rating-scale questions relating to elements of small-town character. Councilwoman Holloway explained that, during the previous strategic planning cycle, the Town identified unique community events, walkability, and historic architecture as defining traits. Councilman Newman suggested changing language from "retaining" to "fostering," expressing concern that "retaining" implies decline. Council agreed and modified the heading accordingly. Council removed "natural environment" from this category, determining it fit better under environmental stewardship.

Council reached consensus that the beachfront section should be removed entirely. Members expressed concern that repeatedly surveying the same issues, such as dune height, fishing pier condition, and shoreline protection, could create frustration among residents. Since the Beachfront Master Plan already solicited extensive feedback, Council agreed that further questions would be duplicative and potentially confusing.

Council noted that many residents were unaware of which portions of the harbor the Town manages, so questions should explicitly reference the town docks, boat slips, and walkways. Councilman Newman recommended rewording open-ended questions to encourage input on physical conditions and amenities rather than broader harbor operations. Council supported retaining a question on needed improvements.

Council discussed concerns about maintenance, facility usage, and amenity feedback. Council supported adding specific items such as the restrooms, walkway, playground, tennis/pickleball courts and splash pad to allow more targeted feedback.

Council agreed that asking residents to rate the Town's efforts could create misleading impressions, given regional coordination with Northampton County and ongoing grant-funded planning efforts. However, Council felt it was still useful to ask residents how important environmental stewardship was to them and which priorities they believed the Town should focus on. Recycling was removed from the list due to the lack of contractors in the area to provide curbside recycling.

Council discussed the Town's strategic plan language regarding business environment and economic vitality. It was noted that Cape Charles Main Street was the Town's designated economic development partner and regularly fielded inquiries about desired business types. Council agreed to retain an open-ended question asking what types of businesses residents would like to see, removing specific categories that could imply Town-led recruitment.

Council confirmed that visitor feedback was valuable. The survey would retain a visitor experience rating question and ask which factors contributed most to a positive visit.

After a lengthy discussion, Council agreed to remove the housing options section. It was noted that past controversies surrounding housing policy and expressed concern that including housing questions could imply Town-led initiatives. Council reiterated that housing discussions were guided by zoning updates and not by survey sentiment.

Council decided that each Town department should be evaluated individually through rating scales. The open-ended question asking "which services need improvement and why" was removed in favor of a structured list that would generate clearer data. Council requested departments be listed alphabetically to avoid perceived prioritization.

Council determined that all Goal Headings would be removed.

Council added an open-ended question asking how the Town could enhance community engagement. Council members noted improvements made over the past year, such as recording work sessions and offering additional engagement opportunities, but indicated that resident feedback could provide further direction.

Council discussed last year's participation levels, noting strong community involvement but also expressed a desire to exceed 500 responses this year. Members emphasized releasing the survey earlier in December to prevent drop-off as many residents traveled for the holidays. Council suggested leveraging local organizations, including the Historic District Civic League and Cape

Charles Main Street, to boost participation. Members discussed technical options for survey hosting, including Google Forms, though the Town's limitations regarding Google Suite access were noted.

Rick Keuroglan would clean up the survey as discussed and provide it to Council for review. Staff would finalize the hard copy survey and create an online version using Google Forms.

B. Review Town Manager Evaluation Question

Councilman Grossman recommended holding a discussion-based evaluation during an executive session rather than using numerical scoring. He emphasized the importance of transparency and constructive dialogue. Council members noted the variation in personal scoring tendencies and agreed that qualitative discussion would yield a more accurate evaluation. The Town Manager would also have an opportunity to provide his input during the evaluation. A written summary would be compiled following the meeting for the Town Manager's review.

**Motion made by Councilwoman Holloway, seconded by Councilwoman Ashworth, to adjourn the Town Council Work Session. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.**

The Work Session adjourned at 9:25 PM.

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Adam Charney, Mayor

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Libby Hume, Town Clerk