



Town Council Status Report

Warrenton Commission on Open and Transparent Government

August 11th, 2026

Commission Scope

As adopted in its Mission Statement, the Commission seeks to recommend ways to improve the Town's openness and transparency, including the public's timely access to information regarding the town's governance, policies, and decision-making processes. The Commission's activities are clustered around the following four objectives:

- Ensuring Transparent Decision-Making
- Promoting Public Access to Information
- Encouraging Citizen Engagement
- Enhancing Communication and Outreach

Transparent Decision-Making: Breakdown in Processes and Procedures

- Untimely and premature intervention of government officials
- Communications between government officials, staff and applicants whereby applicants are led to believe their projects are “green-lighted” before the application has been fully and independently vetted by staff, advisory committees, the Town Council and the public.
- Inappropriate influence of applicants on the legislative process, especially through ex-parte communications between the applicant and its representatives and town officials, staff, planning commission members, or council members, including offers of inducements or the promise of employment.
- Non-disclosure agreements (NDA’s)
- Document redactions
- Other techniques to hide information relevant to the public’s understanding of the project and government officials’ legitimate need to know.

Investigation Protocol and Records Access Plan (IPRAP)

Defines scope and process for Independent Counsel and Commission access to, review of, and disclosure of:

- Internal Town Records (Town server)
- Town Records (External, i.e., e-mails stored on third-party servers or other locations)
- Third Party Records (Held by those with interests in the projects, sought voluntarily or, if needed, through compulsory process)
- Interviews (Voluntary interviews relevant to the projects, conducted by Independent Counsel under Town Attorney oversight)

Codes, ordinances and policies

Shortcomings to, or failure to enforce codes, ordinances and policies leading to: lack of accountability. unchecked actions and decisions by government officials, potential corruption and favoritism. inefficiencies and inconsistencies in the application of rules and regulations

- Code of Ethics
- Council Handbook
- Town Charter
- Town Code

Status Report Outline

General Overview of Commission Work To-Date:

- **What We Know:** Facts gathered from AI-assisted review of public records of land-use applications within Commission scope
- **What We Don't Know:** "New unknowns" to be discovered by Independent Counsel's Phase One records review
- **The Path to Discovery:** Overview and benefits of Phase One Town records search
- **Conclusion and Next Steps**

What We Know and How We Know It

Applying AI to Large Datasets for e-discovery (Proof of Concept).

- Timeline of Events for Amazon Blackwell Road Project
- Using Claude AI (Sonnet 5) applied to large public records collection (4.9 GB)
- Timeline compiled in under 30 minutes
- This process can be scaled up to process very large data: Legal e-discovery systems can process 900,000 records per hour with comparable results

What We Don't Know:

- Discovery efforts currently limited to public records; awaiting Independent Counsel selection
- Key questions raised by Commission in its Mission Statement remain unanswered
- **Next step:** Phase One records review, as described in Commission Investigation Protocol (IPRAP)

The Path to Discovery

Proposed Working Roadmap for Independent Counsel (IC) Phase One Review:

1. IC trains their AI on existing public records related to Amazon, Warrenton Village, and Arrington to help AI learn what is to be searched
2. AI-assisted e-discovery system (such as Westlaw Co-Counsel) then applied to existing Intradyn archives already retrieved and available (approx. 341,000 records); search process modified as needed
3. New retrieval requests for Town records then made and processed for remainder of Town records subject to IC search protocols

The Path to Discovery: Benefits

- Phase One analysis and review reveals gaps and missing information to justify records requests of involved parties for Phase Two
- Accuracy of AI-assisted search method proven to be far superior to other search methods
- High search accuracy assures the public that a thorough search has been conducted on Town records
- Technology-assisted e-discovery enables Phase One to meet its timing objectives (90 days)
- Commission AI work is viable proof-of-concept for larger scale Phase One processing

Conclusion and Next Steps

- Council approved Commission Investigation Protocol (IPRAP) at July meeting
- Town Attorney currently soliciting bids for Independent Counsel
- Commission will continue to refine AI-assisted records processing methodologies in support of future efforts—this is an entirely new approach for everyone involved