Town Hall Meeting
June 27, 2007

A town hall meeting of the Elkton Town Council was held to receive comments regarding the Kite property. The town hall meeting was held at 6:30 P.M., on June 27, 2007 at the Elkton Area Community Center. Mayor Wayne E. Printz presided. The following Council members were present:

PRESENT
M. Dearing
M. Isom
D. Kite
M. O'Neill
T. Pence
S. Sigafoose

Town Attorney Lauri A. N. Sigler, Treasurer Clairen Sipe and Clerk of Council Denise R. Monger were also present.

Acting Town Superintendent/Zoning Administrator Marty Shifflett was not in attendance.

The town hall meeting was opened and the following comments were made:

Mayor Printz spoke in reference to presentation documents given at the meeting. He stated the documents listed addresses for Council members and listed employees of the Town. He read the following from the presentation documents:

"This is the first of many Town Hall Meetings with our citizens and friends. We as a Council believe the opinions of our citizens are important. Due to a host of issues, information is not always correctly conveyed to us. This is an opportunity for face to face answers. We are proud of you attending with us and certainly welcome you here to our beautiful Community Center.

We will give a brief overview of what we believe to be the overall condition of the Town, our accomplishments and our future goals. A very high priority is our waste treatment facility and proposals of usage of Miss Kite's property.

Our employees are our most valuable resource. Below is a list of names with perspective job titles. We are very proud of our employees."

Mayor Printz acknowledged Daniel Talbot and thanked him for his attendance. He further thanked Harry Armbruster, Madelyn Dixon, Cathy Morrison, Jeremy Ream, Marty Shifflett and Theodore Pence as Council Representative to the commission.

The accomplishments of the Town were discussed, such as: improved relationships with the County, Water and Sewer Agreement, focus growth where infrastructure exists or is already planned, Angler Agreement, work with the County to build a new High School and Elementary School, Community Center, and the peak generator.

Finance matters of the Town were discussed as follows: 11.9 million dollars in assets, Kite property potentially worth 15-20 million dollars, approximately 5.76 million dollars of debt and repo accounts holding $650,000.00-$750,000.00.

The highest priorities for the Town were discussed as follows: Waste Treatment Facility upgrade, Town clean up, Kite property plan, wells in Elkwood, and the Community Center loan paid down and the start of Phase II.

Issues regarding planning were discussed as follows: revise zoning ordinance for a business district, balance and manage growth as to not abandon the downtown area, focus growth where infrastructure exists or is planned, impact study, plan for affordable

housing, new roads for access, improvement of existing roads, wetland consideration, density, flood protection, spring protection, use of Kite House, development authority for funding, streets and sidewalks, Waste Treatment Facility, town revitalization, Bass Pro or Gander Mountain type businesses and a possible partnership with Massanutten.

Recreational projects possibly funded by the Kite property were discussed as follows: pay off Community Center loans, recreational use of river with installation of boat landings, establish bike and pedestrian paths, fund additional youth and senior citizen programs at the Community Center and railroad would be a possibility.

Fee/Permit structures and taxes from Kite property were discussed as follows: additional tax revenue for the Town from any new business and residence, additional revenue for Town from permits from any new business or residence, and decision on electrical ownership.

Administrative benefits were discussed as follows: fund and staff additional positions with the Town such as an additional police officer, etc…, and fund additional projects like the Community Center.

The town hall meeting continued and the following comments were made:

Pete Bonavita, 17119 Mt. Pleasant Road, Elkton, shared his ideas for the Kite property. He would like to see a plan to benefit everyone in the community. He stated a plan of that size may take ten to fifteen years to complete and the Town must have set goals in mind before beginning any project. He continued that each component of the plan must merge with the other in order for the project to be successful. He spoke in favor of affordable housing, some type of business component, a lake being created and the possibility of the Kite House becoming a focal point similar to the Joshua Wilton House.

Hazel Crider, Elkwood, expressed concern regarding housing for senior citizens. She stated that the Town has had wonderful senior citizens who had moved for lack of accommodations and accommodations that provided maintenance to properties. Mrs. Crider continued she would like Council to consider some type of retirement community in the planning for the Kite property. She requested some planning be taken into consideration for the young people of the community. Mrs. Crider suggested the following recreational ideas: a lake, a skateboarding park, walking trails to accommodate senior citizens and the young people of the community. She stated that Chesterfield County has a skateboarding park and their endeavor had been a success.

Mrs. Crider stated businesses are lacking downtown. However, if Mr. Bonavita's project commenced, his project might bring more people into the community to support business in the downtown area.

Mayor Printz stated that numerous developers had contacted the Town regarding the Kite property. He stated it was the intention of Council to create a plan with the citizens before speaking with a developer.

Mrs. Crider responded that a marketing campaign should be created to attract possible developers to create a retirement community. Vice Mayor Dearing responded that one developer had suggested a retirement village in the form of apartments and that idea was unsatisfactory to Council.

Council member O'Neill stated a business district and park area should both be high priorities regarding the Kite property. He asked Council and the citizens to ponder if they would take less money for the land to get what everyone wanted. He continued that he agreed with Mrs. Crider that it would be possible to attain what people want but not at top dollar. He stated as a governing body that he felt it was Council's responsibility not to make profit their top priority, but to make service to the community

their top concern. Council member O'Neill supported the idea of some type of retirement community with progressive care.

Informal discussions took place with various audience members speaking regarding an array of subjects from lakes, to water lines, wetlands, bicycle paths, downtown parking, and restaurants on Blue and Gold Drive.

George Grunwald, 280 Windsong Hills Drive, Elkton, spoke in favor of affordable housing for senior citizens, walking paths and a lake. He stated if the prior referenced items were created, business in Elkton would increase. He agreed with Mr. Bonavita that Council needed to develop a plan for the Kite property. He recommended that Council consider consulting with other individuals or companies on the matter, if needed, in order to avoid any complications. Mr. Grunwald stated he understood the concern for the downtown area. However, there was no business in the downtown area. He believes one reason was due to parking.

Brenda Mercer, Elkton, spoke of commercial businesses downtown and asked Council to allow that area to benefit from any plan of the Kite property due to its historical and sentimental value. She suggested more professional businesses be considered for rental due to their requirement for less parking.

Vice Mayor Dearing added that downtown had a lot to offer and 60% of the Town's revenue came from the business district. Further, he stated that 17 stores are empty and that revenue loss would translate to homeowners.

Pete Bonavita discussed Staunton's Beverly Street, the need to change Elkton's streetscape and the possibility of applying and receiving grants to assist with that process.

Council member Pence stated that in past years, more people parked on the street than at present. He requested Council allow the Planning Commission to study and review the Kite property for a period of six months and return to Council with their findings. Brief discussion continued regarding the Planning Commission's involvement with the project.

Madelyn Dixon stated she was in favor of advertisement in journals or other markets to sell the property. She stated a development could be acquired and the Town could control the project according to its Bylaws.

A brief discussion took place regarding R-8 zoning, density and the comp plan. Mrs. Dixon reiterated that the Town could control any project. Council member O'Neill stated that the Town would have to inform the developers of the items that would be in the plan. Mayor Printz stated that if the Town does not specify requirements in the project and the developer meets specifications there would be no alternative to a huge density project similar to the previous project that was rejected by the citizens. If requirements are put in place and the developer does not meet those requirements, then the Town would have the option of not selling the land.

Council member O'Neill discussed the differences between a bid and a request for proposal from developers regarding the Kite property.

Bill McDonald, Elkton, spoke briefly regarding the previous Town Manager and his pursuit of grants for the Town. Mr. McDonald stated the Town has the option to pursue those funds each year. Vice Mayor Dearing stated that the grant money (ISTEA) is very restrictive with many requirements and that most jobs can be done cheaper without the grant and the requirements. He further stated that he thought management was an issue. Mr. McDonald agreed with Council member Pence that the matter should be sent to the Planning Commission for review and returned to Council with

recommendations. Vice Mayor Dearing agreed that professionals should be consulted for the project.

Council member Isom stated she was glad that Council and the citizens have agreed on ideas for the Kite property. She wanted to ensure that everyone would be proud of the result of the project and that the citizens would get services out of that area. She also stated that Council was considering components of the project that might bring employment to the area. Council member Isom stated that she and her family love the outdoors and would support a lake in that area. She asked the citizens to have patience with Council as they consider all options and the best benefit for all citizens from the project.

Vic Corbo, Elkton, asked Council to keep in mind all the components for the project and that a developer is only interested in a return on an investment.

Council member O'Neill stated that VDOT owns the primary road through the downtown area. Therefore, the town has no control over that area. He questioned if the Town should consider making way for new construction. Vice Mayor Dearing suggested the Town subsidize and assist new businesses and revitalize the downtown area.

Council member Kite stated that the debt service of the Town is approximately $40,000.00 and Mary Elizabeth Kite is paid $50,000.00 until the date of her death. Pursuant to those terms, there is no set end date for payments to cease. He spoke of the lake ideas mentioned by the citizens and expressed concerns regarding flooding issues. He continued he would support some type of retirement community. However, he was more in favor of selling the property. He stated that Elkton was a conservative Town with conservative people. He briefly discussed his assistance with a business in Town that was on the verge of closure and his attempts to persuade small restaurant owners to open new businesses in Town. He urged everyone to also consider resources while considering different components for the Kite project.

A short discussion took place regarding the financing and purchase of the Kite properties.

Randall Snow, Elkton, also spoke in favor of some type of plan for the Kite property. He gave a brief synopsis of the circumstances regarding the Angler plan and stated that density would to be an issue for Council to consider. He suggested the following: sell the property for the most profit available, limit the restrictions imposed on the property in order to attract a developer and sell the property as one project as opposed to many small projects. He stated that Council needed to profit on the project in order to alleviate as much debt as possible, pay for the community center building and begin phase II with the pool and the basketball courts.

Mr. Snow briefly discussed various issues regarding a previous golf course plan and the peaking generator the Town had expressed interest in purchasing.

Gene Hauze, Massanutten, stated he assisted with a project in the Massanutten area. He advised Council not to pay a planner $35,000.00 for their assistance with the project and do not hire one from the Northern Virginia area. He suggested Council draft a new zoning law, if needed, to aid in the sale or development of the Kite property.

Dan Talbot, Planning Commission Chair, spoke that he agreed with the citizens that spoke in favor of Council devising a plan before moving forward with the Kite property. He discussed the pros and cons in contacting consultants or economic professionals to advise the Town on various matters. He stated he would like some direction from the Council on the matter as this would enable him to better understand which components would be needed to begin the process.

Mr. Talbot further stated that the Planning Commission has not been officially asked to review the Kite property. He had spoken with all of the planning commissioners and all were amicable to the idea of creating a plan from the concepts received and producing two or three viable alternatives for all parties to review and discuss. However, he was uncertain of the time element involved and any specific instructions.

Mayor Printz stated that the parties should continue to meet and attempt to create a brief summary of components to include in the plan. He suggested that Council and the Planning Commission meet again to discuss the matter. Mr. Talbot added that if Council wants the Planning Commission to develop a potential plan based on the ideas shared at the meeting, the commission would do so.

Council member O'Neill stated he would like to meet with developers regarding the matter.

Vice Mayor Dearing asked Council to review and narrow the list of components to be included in the plan for the Kite property. He requested that Mr. Talbot and the Planning Commission develop three plans for the Kite property within six months for Council's review. Mayor Printz did not concur with the idea.

Council member O'Neill favored the Planning Commission meeting with some developers to assist with the process and entertain options.

Mayor Printz also stressed the need for Council to review and prepare the list of components that should be included in the plan and then seek professionals to advise on the matter.

Mr. Talbot stated the Planning Commission would advise fairly and objectively on the Kite property once the commission had reviewed the list of components derived from the meeting. The commission would prepare a proposal stating favorable and unfavorable options that would also include information regarding the financial aspect of the project. Mayor Printz stated that developers or planners should be consulted. He continued that the developers/planners have access to statistical information for additional services that may be required of fire and rescue squads or such items as the number of additional sidewalks that would be needed.

Council member O'Neill stated Council should charge the Planning Commission with presenting plans or proposals. He stated he would like for the Planning Commission and Council to be in close contact during this process.

Vice Mayor Dearing questioned if the Planning Commission would need additional staff in order to complete the task. Mr. Talbot stated with the influx of data the Town may have to provide assistance. Mayor Printz stated he thought the commission would need assistance with the project due to its magnitude and to ensure a plan was created within a reasonable time. He suggested Council and the Planning Commission meet, discuss which items should be focused for the plan and then seek the advice of professionals.

Vice Mayor Dearing suggested meeting with the Planning Commission within the next week.

Council member O'Neill stated the items he would like to see included in the plan were as follows: business district, green space park area and/or lake area and a retirement community.

Mr. Talbot stated the Planning Commission would need to be charged or assigned the project by Council. Mayor Printz stated he would be involved through the entire project.

Council member Kite spoke of the positive effect educating the citizens and public would have on any plan.

Mr. Talbot stated he was unclear regarding the next course of action Council wanted the Planning Commission to take. Vice Mayor Dearing suggested a future date be set for the Council and Planning Commission to meet. Mayor Printz was in agreement on the matter.

Vice Mayor Dearing stated an official request would be prepared from Council to the Planning Commission at the next Council meeting.

An additional idea was received that possibly the JMU staff may be able to assist with the Kite project.

As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Mayor: _____
Wayne E. Printz

Recorder: Denise R. Monger
Denise R. Monger, Clerk