

TMP-014

Interviewee: Anne Ducey-Ortiz

Interviewer: Jessica Taylor

Date: June 20, 2013

T: This is Jessica Taylor interviewing Anne Ducey-Ortiz on June 20, 2013 at 3:30

PM. Ms. Ducey-Ortiz, can you please state your full name?

D: Anne Marie Ducey-Ortiz.

T: Okay. What is your date of birth?

D: March 25, 1962.

T: Where were you born?

D: I was born in Amityville on Long Island, New York.

T: Okay. What are your parents' names and occupations?

D: My mom is Patricia Gorman, and she is a retired schoolteacher. My dad is William Ducey, and he was an accountant. He's deceased.

T: Okay. Do you have any siblings?

D: I do. I have three siblings- two brothers and a sister.

T: Okay. What is- or was- is your occupation?

D: I'm currently the Director of Planning for Gloucester County, soon to be the Director of Planning and Zoning for Gloucester County.

T: Congratulations.

D: Thanks. Yes.

T: What did you do before this?

D: I've been in Gloucester County for thirteen years, started out as a Planner II, moved up to a Planner III. When the previous Planning Director left, I applied for the job and got it. Then, recently, the zoning administrator left and they're combining departments.

Before that, I worked up in New York. I worked in the town of Huntington as a planner. Before that, I was an environmental analyst, and before that I worked for the Cornell Lab of Ornithology as a wildlife biologist.

T: Wow. That's many lives.

D: That was a world ago.

T: Yeah. So when exactly did you come to Gloucester?

D: 2000.

T: Okay. What brought you here?

D: Well, growing up on Long Island, we lived in a place called Bay Shore. It's kind of a hectic lifestyle up there. My husband worked nights, I worked days. We had a child and we were just looking for a better opportunity. My in-laws had moved down here; again, mostly it's a military connection. They knew someone in the military, they came down and visited the area. It's very much like Long Island used to be before it got very developed. So, they moved down here first, and my parents-in-law moved down, and a planning job opened up. My brother-in-law sent us the advertisement. We kind of weighed the pros and cons and decided to make the big move to Virginia. So, that's what we did thirteen years ago.

T: And what is your first memory of Main Street?

D: Oh, I can tell you that very easily because I came here- it was first for my interview. We had come down and visited my in-laws; they live in Mathews. We would always go down to the Mariners' Museum because my- my husband is a big boat person. We would drive by the intersection where the Edge Hill Texaco is, and we'd always make the left; never made the right. When my brother-in-law

sent me the job description, I'm like, Gloucester's really ugly. I just- because all I saw of Gloucester was Route 17 from the Courthouse to the Point. I don't know if you've driven that, but it's- you know. It's developed a lot in the [19]80s, a lot of it done without zoning. So, when I came for my interview, I made the right.

[Laughs] They had already done the enhancement project, so I was like, I can't believe this cute little village is down here. My interview was in County Building 1, so I had to go around the circle. Actually, no- I interviewed twice. First, I interviewed in this building, which is the old garage. Then the second one was in County Building 1, which is what they call the old Daily Press building. But, I couldn't believe that this was here, and the historic structures around the circle were. I remember my husband met me after the interview, and we sat out in front of- at the time it was Kelsick; it's now the Wild Rabbit- and we had lunch out, you know. It was in March, and it was a beautiful day, and all the daffodils were blooming, and it was just, I could work here. [Laughter] Fortunately, I got the job.

T: Yeah. There's this huge aesthetic contrast between Gloucester Courthouse and then Gloucester after suburbanization.

D: Right. Again, thinking of Gloucester being a pretty big community, so the big difference between Gloucester, Route 17, and then the Main Street village, and then I hadn't even seen the North end of Gloucester, which is very rural. So, yeah, big difference.

T: So can we talk a little bit more about the aesthetic you saw and how you as- coming at this from a planning perspective- saw that maybe you could change it?

D: That was a big reason for moving down here, which is- it's funny, I was just talking to someone about this the other day, because, you know, growing up on Long Island, I grew up on the water, saw the impacts of pollution. Putting in the water and sewer, you know, all that stuff. With the environmental movement, most localities were forced to deal with the Clean Water Act. So, in New York, all the towns put in public sewers, and we actually had bonds for open space preservation. All of this stuff was going on on Long Island, and I worked in a pretty big planning office. You know, there wasn't really opportunity to move up, and all I did was subdivision reviews. So, I saw this position as an opportunity to come to an area that hadn't been developed that strongly and make a difference. It's kind of funny coming down here and seeing us- us being Gloucester- going through the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act the TMDLs- Total Maximum Daily Loads- trying to be on a pollution diet; in our public water and sewer. We're investing in public water and sewer and trying to get those hookups. So, going through the same growing pains that we went through in Long Island. Then, down here, people have a strong sense of property rights, versus up there it was property values. So, after people had been impacted by development, then they want the city water. Whereas here, having the foresight of wanting to protect it before it got destroyed- it exists to some extent because a lot of people have moved here from other areas and they know what could happen. A lot of times the come-heres are the ones that are on the historical committee, or that are trying to preserve what was here. Even up in Mathews, the Mathews Maritime Foundation was mostly started by people- a lot of them are from Long Island.

[Laughter] I don't know if I went off on a tangent- I tend to do that. That was my idea as a planner, though, and kind of being stuck in the politics; there's people's perceptions. Being in a democracy, you have a right for your say but not for your way. The way is the way of the majority, or those that chose to attend. A lot of our laws and everything are based on those people that wrote them. So, it's not always working the way I would hope it would. In Gloucester, there's a lot of opportunities, but Gloucester too seems to not take them. It tends to be low taxes, and trying to protect people's property rights. A lot of times, things that you do to protect the general good cost money, like doing an archaeological survey costs money. If you're trying to get development to keep taxes low, you don't always want to make someone spend that extra money.

T: Right. You're coming into a community that already has a vision for itself, which is largely based on property rights. What is that public involvement like? What do you often hear at public forums or things like that?

D: I often joke around that Gloucester's kind of bipolar, because you hear different things from different people. In our comprehensive plan, and actually in a lot of the meetings- we're actually working on updating our comprehensive plan- the idea of rural character is like one that constantly comes up: we're trying to preserve our rural character. It's interesting, because what I consider rural might be different from what someone else might consider rural. We even have that whole discussion of, what do you consider rural character? Then even, you know, rural character versus a working rural atmosphere. So, an actual farm with pesticides and smelly cows or whatever may not be someone's idea of a bucolic

rural character, you know? So we have that, but then we also hear people want economic development. They want to keep taxes low, and in order to keep taxes low, we need more development. We need more jobs. Most of our community commutes across the bridge to the military jobs, to the jobs over in Hampton Roads. So, trying to keep people here and work here, but then you have that critical mass. More jobs, more people, more development. It's that dichotomy of two different things. I actually believe you can protect your rural character and still have that, because we have the north end of the county. You can have economic development in a village atmosphere. One of our recent plans at Gloucester Point is trying to convert Gloucester Point through development into more of a village, because 17 came through. We had all this room and no one really thought about that's the only road. They didn't make the road connections; there really wasn't a lot of planning. Now, everyone goes on 17 and you have all that congestion. Most people complain about the quality of life, the congestion on 17, how ugly it is. But yeah, we need more development. How do you fix that? Our growth management plan is in the comprehensive plan and is in the future plan is to keep growth in between the Courthouse and the Point, and to try to focus it. That's where we have water and sewer. But to keep the two village areas kind of village-y, walkable, we need to create a kind of walkability at the Point. At the Courthouse, we have some, but we don't really have it like outside Main Street. Those are kind of our plans, and to try to keep the North end of the county rural, available for working farmers.

We're also trying to do more for working waterfronts. We had a really strong waterman economy, and with suburbanization that's kind of gotten out of the way. People come here, they have their boats, they have their jet skis. The working waterfronts, they're not wealthy. They're losing their places to dock. So, we're actually making a strong effort to try to improve that. One of the things- that's public access to the water. We're a natural resources-based community. We're starting to lose that, because, again, when you drive on 17, you don't see how beautiful Gloucester is. But if you see it from the water, it's beautiful. If you see it from some of the roads- the scenic roads in the back- but you don't see it. You and I just driving wouldn't see it.

T: That's true. That also gives me a lot of follow-up questions. You also mentioned come-heres, and how they're the people on the preservation committees. But, a lot of the natives- people that, you know, claim ancestry here- would say that the come-heres are the ones that want Starbucks and Wendy's and another Wal-Mart and all these other amenities that natives don't really want. I was hoping to get your take on that.

D: I think it's individuals. When you say, natives don't want it, that's not been my experience. I think that it's a pretty- I think it's more of a personal thing. I think most people that have lived here a long time- come-heres and been-heres- first embrace the change. I mean, to not have to drive over the bridge to go get certain things- people still talk about the first Hardee's, the first traffic light, when Wal-Mart first came. Then we went to Super Wal-Mart. I think there was a point where, oh. Wait a second. This is too much. Now, it's like people get used to

convenience and not having to drive- actually, I guess people used to drive to Richmond a lot, too. Now it's like, well, we have all this stuff. When can we get the- well, no, we do, actually- we do have a Starbucks. [Laughter] What's the one- Ukrops, or- they don't have a Ukrops anymore- whatever fancy grocery store we need now. I think some of the been-heres, they still want economic development, because they want to keep taxes low. I think a lot of the come-heres want services that they were used to in their previous location. Those services cost money, and those services result in higher taxes, and so, in order to keep the taxes low you need more commercial development. So, I think it's not that simple answer. I don't disagree, and I've argued with my in-laws about this. I think when you move to an area, you should know where you're moving and you're moving there because you like it that way. So, I think a lot of us that come here would like to keep it this way. We joke around, I want to be the last one in and shut the door behind me. I get very frustrated when people move here from other areas and they hate the hunting dogs. Well, you moved to a community where hunting is a big thing. They don't like the watermen. They don't want the oyster boats making noise in the morning. Well, you moved here to a rural area. Those are the kind of things that upset me about the development. I think that development is just kind of a- it's like evolution, you know? You just get more people; more people want more things, whether it's more opportunities to shop or you need sewer to protect the water because you have too many septic systems. That's the result of more people, and people are attracted to good areas. Some

people like driving an hour to go to the mall, and other people want to live five minutes from the mall.

T: [Laughter] Fair enough. What's really cool about how you're protecting rural life is that it's also based not just on having a low population density but about, like, the activities that make it rural and make it a rural-based economy. I was wondering if you could talk about the inspiration for trying to protect specifically the watermen's economy.

D: That actually started with the oysters, the growing oyster industry. The oysters died, and then now they grow them in cages. I don't pretend to know a lot about this but enough to get myself in trouble. That's what planners are- jack of all trades, masters of none. So, we can talk a little about everything. People started getting into growing oysters, at their homes and at their docks. We had this one situation down at Gloucester Point where somebody was growing oysters and a neighbor complained. It kind of brought this whole use-conflict thing of, you have all these uses along the waterfront, and the board was hearing complaints about the oystermen, but then the oystermen are good and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation was actually paying people to grow oysters to clean the bay. So, the Middle Peninsula Planning District, through their program, asked the board about creating- it was called the York River Use Conflict Committee. I was chosen as a planner to serve on that, and we had a board member, and then there were just all these different people. All these ideas about the watermen kind of came out, like that their docks- people are buying up the marinas and fixing them up, raising the standards. The watermen had nowhere to go. Commercial piers with all the

regulations septic systems were not allowed to be used. All these changes, all these regulations were kind of kicking them out. Watermen are very proud. They're not going to come ask, they're not going to come complain. They're not going to come to a board meeting. Being part of the committee, I realized all of the things like our ordinances actually were written for suburbanization. They actually encouraged the loss of watermen. I mean, like, if you wanted to be a waterman who had to get special exception; you had to go through this different process. It really should be by-right use. They were here first. We've been working ever since that. So, that was building awareness to me that our ordinances were actually hindering what people said they wanted. We've been working on changing. We did an ordinance for aquaculture to, you know, allow by-right, to not kind of put a road block. We also did the same thing with agriculture. Our ordinances tried to separate agricultural uses, which are the white [on county map] from the suburban. We didn't allow farming in a residential district, but a lot of the residential districts had existing farms. And then, we didn't allow farm stands. We say we want to preserve the rural character, and yet someone wants to come in and put a farm stand: Oh, it's not permitted. We again modified our ordinance just recently to allow that. I would say that the ordinances were written in the [19]80s when we were the highest growing locality. So, I think they were just trying to, you know, this was residential. You know, separate the uses. That stuff about growing local, and buying local- we're kind of reversing some of that and supporting that stuff.

T: Plus, when you have an agricultural economy that what's it called now- agrotourism?

D: Yeah. Yeah.

T: Is that something that you can see happening in Gloucester more?

D: I'm trying, actually. That's a thing I wanted to do, is use that as economic development. Our economic development guy is more like- he's more into the industrial park and working with Hampton Roads. I'm sorry, I'm talking too much.

T: Oh, sorry.

D: I'm not used to talking straight through. Excuse me. So actually, that ordinance was meant to help agrotourism. We actually added that to our definitions. I'd love to see a winery or something, because we're kind of the big fish in the Middle Peninsula. We're kind of connected to the rest of Middlesex and they're very rural- Middlesex, Essex. So, I see a real great opportunity for agrotourism and ecotourism. One of the ideas for Main Street is trying to connect down to the Warehouse Landing Road, and we have a Blueways guide, which we just recently developed. That's one of the points. Hopefully, those people come, shop, eat on Main Street. Again there's ways- we have tourism from the historical point of view, agrotourism, which is really kind of right now not a big thing, but hoping to encourage more of that. Even the watermen- I always joke around that we should have an Oyster Trail. [Laughter] All of these things, it's who's going to spearhead them. Those are the kind of things the county might help with an idea, but you need somebody to carry, kind of like the Main Street Preservation Trust is doing a lot of that here on Main Street. So, trying to get a champion. We

actually finally had a champion for the Blueways. We were able to get that going because somebody wanted to start a charter doing kayak charter-type things. They really encouraged working with the county, we created partnerships with VIMS, and now we have a little Blueways guide, you know, with five different trails in the county. Those are all just things that we've heard from citizens, a lot of come-heres, too. That these are things- we live in such a beautiful area but we're not really supporting them. I think that's just a change similar to the change that happened in New York, where they're seeing their county focusing on stuff and not focusing on the natural resources that were here that attracted people to come here in the beginning.

T: Right. The last place I interviewed people like this was in Nantucket.

D: Oh, okay. I have a friend there.

T: You do? In the planning department?

D: No, she actually works for- it's a conservation group. They own quite a bit of property up there. Her name's Karen Beatty.

T: Oh, no. Yeah. But I interviewed people from the Conservation Foundation. The guy that engineered tourism up there said that, I don't want an ice cream cone tourist. I want a tourist that's going to buy a five thousand dollar painting and a sports coat. I'm sort of wondering because- the tourism in Gloucester is really getting off the ground, because you're starting to organize it. What kind of people are you kind of trying to attract?

D: Definitely not those people. [Laughter] I think we really haven't thought about that, other than we want to try everybody. There has been discussion that-

originally, we focused a lot on our history. With Gloucester, unfortunately, we don't or haven't historically, we haven't taken advantage of our history. Most of the great things that occurred were, again, individuals that fought for Fairfield, Rosewell, TC Walker House- we're trying to organize something with that. When they actually created the Department of Tourism- so it used to all be all be- and I think you already interviewed Carol- so originally, it was just Parks and Rec and they created Tourism. We actually take a certain percentage of our lodging tax that goes toward tourism. They've been really working on fixing the structures around the court circle and trying to promote events and everything with tourism- historic tourism. They're kind of like, well, who does that? That's kind of the older demographics. Most people that are into history tend to be older, you know, not to stereotype. So, how do we get a different demographic? That's kind of where we came up with some of the ecotourism ideas. We did a bike ride, and we're trying to- still trying to get a bike thing going. It's really hard to because our rural roads are great to ride bikes on, but they're not really safe. And that's really expensive, to make bike trails. Really expensive. When I say we're trying to attract people, that's just like another group. Okay, well, we kind of have- I'm not saying we have, because we still can promote a lot of our historic tours much better, but it's just hard to pull people from all the great stuff in Williamsburg and Yorktown, and you don't have the money to have the riverfront they have. I don't know if you ever saw our little gazebo. That's our riverfront. I guess we're trying to be geared towards as many people as possible. The agrotourism, like a pumpkin patch or something, try to get the little kids. We do the Daffodil Festival;

they do the Chalk Fest. I think we are trying to gear it to as many people as possible to try to get every kind of demographic. We don't have a lot of money to do capital improvements, to fix things up. I think Main Street is our jam, but there's really not a lot here. We're working on trying to get like a bikeway from Beaverdam Park to Main Street, trying to combine the natural and environmental with the historic. But we'll take any tourist that's wanting to come visit Gloucester, spend money. When I first got here, we didn't even have a hotel. We just had the two motels. So now we have the Comfort Inn and the Hampton Inn. I'm not saying anything against the motels, but at least people have a place to stay. Then we have some really nice bed and breakfasts, and they're always helpful with the tourist ideas. We have a great group of- a base of volunteers here in Gloucester County.

T: Okay. One of the things that a very old man who lives on Main Street said about Main Street is that it's the first time in his life that he can't walk to, like, some place that he can get bread or gasoline.

D: I actually know who said that.

T: Do you? Yeah, I'm sure you do.

D: He's brought it up at many meetings. [Laughter] It's not true; you can walk to the Dollar General and they sell bread.

T: Okay. [Laughter]

D: Things change. One of the things I'm trying to do is connect Main Street across 17, which really isn't Main Street, but I am upset that I can't walk to Gloucester Pharmacy. I could walk, physically, but I would have to cross 17, which is not

comforting. We are trying to get a pedestrian signal at either end of Main Street, so you could cross 17 safely. Pretty expensive, and it's in a plan. Even though VDOT says they support- and this is probably something I shouldn't say on record- VDOT theoretically supports bike and pedestrians, but their idea is to move traffic. So, even though they have a policy of supporting bicycle and pedestrians, it's kind of hard to get them to spend money on it. The county doesn't maintain any of our own roads, so we don't put money towards it either. You have these ideas. Parks and Rec did a study, and people want walking trails and stuff, but nobody's willing to pay for it. That being said, I think Main Street has changed, and that's capitalism. Unfortunately, we don't have any control of that. When I first got here, the post office was in the Morgan building, and so the post office just draws people to Main Street. So you had the post office, and then where the current library is, that was a grocery store, and it closed down. Unfortunately, back in the day, when he could go shopping on Main Street, it was small little markets. People didn't get in their car; it wasn't such an auto-based economy. I mean, there was a ferry to go across the bridge, so you would shop on Main Street. You wouldn't be going across the bridge to Costco or Sam's Club. I don't think you could recreate the past. I think you can create a new current. I know personally- I don't know if you've experienced our parking situation, but once I've parked in that spot I don't like to move my car. I will walk anywhere. I walk to all my meetings, I will walk down to the Dollar General [Laughter] because it's just not worth getting in a car. But, I don't think most people are like that. I think they go for the convenience. Even with the parking on

Main Street, people say there's no parking. There's plenty of parking on Main Street, but everyone wants parking right in front of the store that they're going to, whereas if you go to Wal-Mart you park way back. It's all people's perceptions. We just did a plan for Main Street, and parking comes up all the time. Coming from New York, they don't know what a parking problem is. [Laughter] Then you want to have a parking problem, because that means that you have a vibrant downtown. People are willing to park and walk if there are things to walk to. I think that vision will come true on Gloucester's Main Street. It's just going to take time.

T: What are some of the threats that you see to creating a vision of Gloucester Courthouse that everybody can be happy with?

D: I think some of the NIMBYism, because people say- so the community says they want certain things, but people living here may not want that change. Some of the changes- the increased density, and as we just talked about increased density means increased traffic. You might be a little bit more inconvenienced on Main Street to deal with those people. Theoretically, people wouldn't be having to get in their cars as much, but unfortunately still need to work. I don't think we'll have that many jobs on Main Street- people living and working right on Main Street. I think that's one of the things. Some of it is us rewriting our ordinances to allow the development to go that way. Mostly it's going to be resources. We have an idea for a trail to go all the way around Main Street, and that's going to cost a lot of money. Putting that together, and then dealing with some of the NIMBYism of, well, I don't want that trail in front of my property. I don't want strangers

walking in front of my property. Even the naysaying about having those pedestrian crossways across 17. Who would cross 17? Who would walk on 17? Those are just some of the negativity. But for as many people as are negative, there are people that want it. I think you have to be most responsive to the people that live here, because they do, so if they really don't want it it's probably not going to happen. Even the original Main Street Enhancement Project- they talked about putting a bike trail on Main Street and the group decided not to. Now, I always see people biking on Main Street. If you want to go through the county, you can go on 17 or you have to go through at least a portion of Main Street. Decisions are made in a certain place and time, and that decision might impact- might close a door, might open a door. But when you think over history, every decision affects the future some way or the other, and either helps it to achieve the goal or puts a hindrance on achieving that goal.

T: Do you have any specific moments in mind where NIMBYism or sort of that bipolarism that you're talking about ended up kind of scrapping a plan?

D: There's lots of times that I think that. Well, one good example throughout the county is all the dead-end roads. People like cul-de-sacs and everything, and so like one of our ideas was to have this trail to Beaverdam Park from the Courthouse. All the subdivisions- so, any place that's not a wetland is now a subdivision. None of those roads connect. They go out onto Main Street or out onto Roaring Springs Road. If only it connected we could have this really cool bike thing or something. That's just nobody really thinking about that connectivity in the future. Even our water and sewer plan of just kind of, you have water on

one side and sewer on the other, and it just makes it really expensive to develop. So that kind of creates an issue. I'm trying to think of NIMBYism. Probably a recent one is some multi-family projects- you know, people don't like multi-family. Gloucester, historically- the multi-family we have was built in the [19]80s, when, you know, they put the bridge in and people just expanded over here to Gloucester. It's not the highest-quality multi-family. Some other projects that might have been good projects that were transitional between some commercial areas and residential areas, the neighbors came out and said, no, we don't want these. I guess another good example is the schools, like the new Page Middle School. The community couldn't agree on should the- should the school go back where it was or in the new location? Then, the kind of fight between the school board and the board, and then how much money was spent on the project. You just think if everyone worked together- there was a lot of fighting and a lot of distrust. I'm sure we're going to get a good product, but could it have been better had things been done differently, or had they planned for it ahead of time? They had actually bought that property a long time ago, but didn't really get the community involved in a plan. So, when Page got destroyed by the tornado, you know, instead of everyone embracing, oh, well, this is where it should go, it was a fight. It really wasn't so much NIMBYism as much as a strong sense of where that school should go. It still causes problems today. [Laughter]

T: I mean, you mentioned subdivisions. We sort of think about them as kind of being like the natural, white middle-class place to be. But it's really important to

remember that it's more recent construction. In what ways does having subdivisions like this board right here, how does that change the game?

D: I think in Gloucester the subdivisions came into being as we were growing. It's classic throughout the country, but after World War II and the GI Bill and all the people coming home and raising families, they were looking for places to go. If you think about Hampton Roads being a major military area, those people- a lot of people moved here because, oh, well, I remember when I was in Norfolk for whatever. Then developers started creating subdivisions, which worked for those families. Even in an agricultural area like Gloucester, they were embraced. We have the Waterview subdivision down at the Point, which is actually very nicely laid out. Then, you can kind of see as time- more developers started developing. Then you've got the cheaper homes, and Smurf Villages- there's one place that was called Smurf Villages with little houses. At the time, the counties were small. You had very small government, which is what people wanted to go back to. But like, we had tons of subdivisions build private roads, no road maintenance agreements. Now we require them to all be public roads. Everything grows over time and you react. Most of the reaction- you always zone to the lowest common denominator. Somebody does something bad, somebody doesn't do things the right way, let's make a law. So, that's kind of Gloucester. A lot of the laws we have today are based on people not developing correctly, not doing the road maintenance agreement. Okay, we can't trust that they're going to maintain their own roads, so, you know, we have to have state roads. Even state building codes standards were developed because some of the homes that were built

were real shoddy. Now you have to connect to public water and sewer because of all these multi-family homes on septic. Again, I think it's just evolution in terms of changing the game. Our rural economy got more suburban, we needed more services, so we had to build more schools, and we had to build the sewer system, and we had to build the reservoir because we had to provide water for all these people. So it's just kind of this evolution, you know?

T: Yeah, absolutely. Do you have examples of kind of that reactionary law-making, where someone does something, like, shoddy. I mean, who are they doing this shoddy stuff to? Why is there not like a public-?

D: Well, I think that's exactly what happened. A perfect example is our current zoning and subdivision ordinance, which was adopted right before I started working here. I was able to kind of- actually, I read all of the minutes of the hearings; it was very contentious. Basically, Gloucester didn't have zoning until 1984. I had just graduated from college; you probably weren't even born yet. [Laughs] It's fairly recent, whereas the community I came from in New York, they had it since the [19]30s. But zoning and everything didn't occur until the- I don't know if you know much about it- but the Enabling Act of 1928. Zoning was based on the tenements. People were living in horrible conditions. It's all supposedly for the health, safety, and welfare of the community, and it's part of police power. So you're taking away people's rights for their own good. In 1998, the county did county-wide rezoning. Basically, you were only a subdivision in a certain area. Anything outside that was not a subdivision. So if you did a five-acre lot, it wasn't a subdivision, never got reviewed. So, people were building all these five-acre

lots without providing access to them- dirt roads. Subdivisions were being created without the road maintenance agreement. Mobile homes all over the place. So the county had all these people, but the real estate tax- because in Virginia, county governments totally depend on real property taxes for their costs. So, we were growing very, very fast- fastest growing county in the [19]80s- and we had all these kids in school, school population's going up, and how do we pay for it? We didn't have enough taxes. So, the county at that time made a conscious decision- and the state enabled this- you could limit the number of mobile homes, because mobile homes are considered personal property, not real property. If you have a mobile home on a property, you're only really paying for land. It actually is like a car; it doesn't increase in value, it decreases in value. So, the state actually passed legislation that localities could restrict mobile homes to only in agricultural districts or mobile home parks. The county adopted that ordinance, and it's kind of why we have a funny zoning map. If it was used agriculturally, we had to zone it agriculturally even if that's not the future plan. Then, we really increased our subdivision standards. We limited the number of- the original ordinance said no private roads, but then there was a lot of feedback on that: what if I just wanted it to go to my lot? So we actually allow some non-public roads. We really upped our standards. Then, we also did the highway corridor overlay. 17, you know, which everyone says is so ugly- we put standards in for landscaping and all this stuff. But what it did was it increased the cost of development, which is what the board of supervisors at that time wanted. Our comp plan talked about it. They wanted higher-quality development. That impacts

the little guy that, I used to be able to do this subdivision; now I have to be a developer. I have to have money up front. That was a big change for Gloucester County. Of course, that's right when I got here and people were not happy. For a while, we didn't see any growth. Then we started growing again. That's actually when all these subdivisions came, and then we had the economy just tank. Now, interestingly with the economy, the board is asking us to look at our ordinances and change them to be more encouraging for development, to not have such high standards, to not be so costly.

T: How do you feel about that?

D: I have mixed feelings. I would agree that some of our requirements- like our highway corridor landscaping, are like so many trees and you can't even fit the sewer stuff. I think there's some common sense approach things. What requires a site plan- we need to look at that. But I've actually said to many supervisors, well, okay, you want to be business-friendly. Do you mean any business? I don't mean any business, but any type of development? Or do you want certain standards? The business people, they're hurting right now. Things are really bad in the economy, but the residents that live here that maybe commute over the bridge and still have their jobs, they still want to come home to a rural area. They want to not have to deal with a lot more traffic. It's a lot of, again, that whole weighing everything against each other.

T: Yeah.

D: But my job is to do what the community wants me to do. I don't mean to sound corny, but I know what I want. My job is to do what the majority of people in Gloucester County want.

T: Yeah.

D: Not always easy.

T: No. Yeah. Let me ask you, just kind of switching subjects, where does preservation fit into all this?

D: Preservation is totally voluntary. As a matter of fact, we just- I've spent four years working on an ordinance to try to require cultural- well, preservation of structures. We have a very limited historic ordinance. Basically, in 1984 when we adopted zoning, any property that was on the National Register was included as an Historic District. That was the Gloucester Courthouse Square Historic District, and then it's just individual properties throughout the county. Actually, on that map, they're striped red. There's not a lot of them, and they are spread out. Typically, the historic district is a district, and it would usually benefit the public because you can see it from the road. Then, our historical committee- our ordinances are terrible. I mean, it's just two pages, doesn't give them a lot of direction. The historical committee is a group of volunteers, not specifically trained in preservation. So, a lot of the preservation that goes on in the county is voluntary. People buy homes and they care about them and they take care of them. So, we have sixteen properties- one was just taken off- in our regulated historic district. We have a lot more properties that are on the National and State Register. Anything they do they can get tax credits or whatever, but it's totally

voluntary. The county, through various efforts, have tried three times in the thirteen years- four times in the thirteen years that I've been here to revise the historical ordinance. It's pretty much failed every time. The board does not want to put restrictions, put additional burden on property owners to preserve their structures. They don't want an architectural review board. We just recently got into- the state just enabled localities to require some type of documentation for culture resources, which would also include archaeology. We worked with Thane and David and two people from the historical committee and a bunch of people from Main Street on an ordinance to potentially require culture resource surveys on certain type of development. Even that group of people could not agree on what would be needed. We did a lot of work. We actually- there's this old **Farmer Nicholson** map, two archaeologists, citizens, just people that are interested- and they had this old map and they had sticky notes, little pushpins and sticky notes. Bill Lawrence- I don't know if you've met him- he digitized all that, volunteered, and then we worked with GIS. We now have that on the map, so we can pull it up. That's the local data. We compared that with the state's data. We've gotten a lot of information, but we still have no requirements. Pretty much the community said that the county's not ready for an ordinance at this time. But, at least now staff can identify resources. If somebody is coming up with a development, we can say, well, do you know that you have this historic situation here and there might be archaeology on your site? Maybe you want to consider- But it's all voluntary.

T: Yeah. I mean, when I was in Nantucket, it was the same thing. They were actually trying to put jurisdiction of the historical committee over the inside of the house.

D: Oh, wow. I know they have strict rules on the outside.

T: Yeah. So, the NIMBYism struck back in that moment. But, in a place that's really concerned with property rights, and also it's the property owners that are invested enough to actually do something about restoring or rehabilitating their property, how do you feel like your role could change in the next twenty, thirty years?

D: I think what we try to do now, especially- I mean, I've learned a lot, in just working with these different groups. I've learned a ton from Thane and David. Whenever there's a rezoning, we require some type of cultural resources assessment survey. I encourage them more; we actually encourage conservation easements, we're very familiar with the tax credit stuff now. We, again, just try to educate people and provide opportunities and connections. We give out people's names; we have contact information for DHR. I think the county might eventually embrace some type of historic ordinance. I think it would require something horrible to happen, like somebody tearing down a treasured building and putting up a Sheetz. [Laughter] That would require me saying, there's nothing I can do about it. We had an incident: the Sewall's Ordinary. I don't know if you're familiar with the building, but it's historic. But it's not on the National Register, because they- when they put 17, they moved it from this side to this side. So, it's been moved. But it's an old ordinary where people come, and it was a restaurant for

the longest time. People loved it; it was like one of the few restaurants. Then we had Applebee's and Ruby Tuesday's, and the woman tried to sell it. Couldn't sell it, couldn't sell it, couldn't sell it. She's in her sixties and she needed the money, so she sold it to a used car lot. The family bought it. People flipped out. Can't you do anything about it? Well, it's a permitted use, it's not historic- a regulated historic site, it's not even on the National Register, not that that would prevent the use. I thought that was an opportunity, like, well, that's the issue. Our ordinance has no teeth. And this isn't even **covered**. Even if it was in the historic district, there's nothing we can do about it. The Historical Society, which is not associated with the county- they're an independent group- members of them and members of the APVA met with the owners- the Niblets, who are very nice people- and they said, we want to preserve the structure. They've done the best they can as a used car lot, and they've added structures. They had to comply with Highway Corridor Landscaping but it is a used car lot. They used the existing house as an office- well, the existing ordinary. They've kept its integrity, but the use is kind of an awkward use. So that's just an example of what could happen without regulation. But, nothing, nothing...yeah. Then the other one, the Abingdon Glebe, you know, we have Ken Houtz Chevrolet in front of it and then a mini-storage in front of it. You have this historic, church- glebe- thing- sorry, I know what a glebe is now. [Laughter] It's a good thing to know. In front of it are two very commercial structures. Ken Houtz Chevrolet is beautiful, but it is big, with bright lights, and doesn't quite go with the rural bucolic glebe that's behind it. But, there's not a lot of backlash from the community.

T: Yeah.

D: I don't see- again, it would have to be- now, like, the Warner Hall- incredible stewards of their property. A lot of the big property owners are great stewards, but nobody sees them. Again, it would have to be something on 17. Even Edge Hill Texaco, that's being preserved, which is great. Now, had that been torn down and a Sheetz put up, maybe someone might get upset. I don't know, I don't know.

T: You said that one property was taken off. Which one is that?

D: Timberneck. Timberneck farmhouse. They came in for a rezoning for a planned unit development. Really cool, very high-end development. They haven't sold a lot yet. Originally, they had proposed to move the farmhouse, which is- it's a classic historic farmhouse and it's on the National Register, but George Washington didn't sleep there. It's not a plantation. Very functional house. It's a really cool, beautiful house. Falling down, but I wouldn't mind fixing it up and living there if I had tons of money, which is the big thing. So, the developer had offered to move it and donate it to the Historical Society, but then some preservationists said, if you move it, it loses its value. That went to the planning commission. So they said, okay, we won't move it then. We'll offer it for sale. It's on a premier spot overlooking the York River. It's the best lot in the subdivision. If they can't sell it within so many years, then they were going to offer to let somebody move it. But if the road was already built, they were going to have to move it by barge. Then after that, they can raze it. The time period's passed, so they can tear it down. I think it's kind of benign neglect now. It's pretty- it's in

pretty bad shape the last time I saw it. They did make a concerted effort to sell it, and they couldn't sell it. It's still there. No houses- in fact, no lots have been sold. Again, the economy. But, part of that rezoning was that it would be- no longer be zoned under the historic district. They'd have to meet these conditions and then it was taken off.

T: Wow.

D: It's still on the National Register, but the National Register doesn't prevent you from tearing it down.

T: Right.

D: And they did proffer that if it was torn down, they would donate any of the materials to the Historical Gloucester Museum, and document it. So, at least the information would still be there.

T: Yeah. Do you think that these places that are still around- for example, the ruins of Rosewell; Fairfield's another good example- are an opportunity to bring in tourists?

D: I do, although, I think we need more than just them. We hopefully are getting the Middle Peninsula State Park, which is the same location as Fairfield. If that gets there, plus Werowocomoco is a big one, although that I believe is going to be interpreted from Jamestown and people will be ferried over. It's kind of an issue because that's all the way up on Purtan Bay on the north end of the county, and you can see there are not a lot of roads going up there. It's like another issue of the roads going to the state park and to those places are pretty narrow. They're what they called Byrd Act roads. They were county roads back in the day, and

then they were dedicated to the state, so they're literally a thirty-foot easement. There's no room to grow and get bigger. So, to try to create a Colonial Parkway, I mean, again, we don't have the Conservation Corps here to help us build stuff anymore. It's just a different world, and to create the infrastructure to be able to encourage tourism, it's going to be small-scale until...I really don't know if the county would ever get that. There is an idea to do an upriver crossing as a public-private partnership. I don't know how that would go, but in talking to the guy that's interested in doing that, I could see something like the Colonial Parkway. You'd go from the Courthouse and kind of be able to access these historic sites like Werowocomoco, like the Middle Peninsula State Park, and then Rosewell and Fairfield. I know Fairfield has ideas to kind of create this cool archaeological park-type site. Then, the Courthouse area. Then, we also have a really strong African-American history in Gloucester that I would like to see capitalized on. The Moton Center, Holly Knoll is- the Gloucester Institute has bought it and are developing it as kind of a campus for the Gloucester Institute, which is in Richmond. They bring groups out- small groups- and it's still operating like it did when Moton used it as a think tank during the civil rights movement. So, that's kind of cool, and there might be opportunities there, but I don't know how many people that draws. Again, I actually don't want Gloucester to become like Williamsburg. I mean, that's a little too touristy. I mean, like the city. The place is different. Unless things change drastically, I don't see we're going to- our tourism is going to be I think still part of our economy, but not state park-level. But that's years away, years away.

T: Do you have anything you want to share with the entire population of the University of Florida?

D: About Gloucester?

T: Anything. Yeah.

D: Gloucester is a really good community. Working in my field, I get to interact with a lot of people. People can be mean and a lot of people don't like regulations, but when you get to know people and they get to know you, and they kind of understand what you're doing, they want to work with you and they want to help or they're very vocal about how they want to change things. The community itself just has incredible volunteers, and so many of the things that I'm talking about are volunteer-driven. The county helps, but without volunteers that are passionate about things- I guess I would just encourage people to keep that passion and not give up. They'll say, oh, the county won't let me do it or, that's never going to happen. Our board is very responsive to people that come and talk to them, if people come. As a matter of fact, the ordinance that we were just working on was- David Brown came and asked the board if they would consider this. And they did. We spent a lot of time and nothing came of it- well, I shouldn't say nothing came of it. An ordinance didn't come of it, but a lot of partnerships, communication, opportunities to teach each other kind of came of it. I think to me that's the most important, is just kind of those connections you make with people in the community and those opportunities that come from those connections. Like the Edge Hill Texaco, that was a lot of people in different meetings and people talking to each other and then possibilities opened up. All of a sudden, Thane

and David are buying the gas station. I mean, that's really cool. We're trying to do something with TC Walker House which is right on Main Street, and again it's just not time. You put it on the shelf and you wait. The cool stuff that happened around the court circle: they uncovered a bunch of- there's a whole town under there. That's just the cool thing that happened. Again, the thirteen years I've been here, you sometimes think, oh, we're not making any progress. We have all these plans and nothing's happening. Those little incremental changes that just occur, just little baby steps, and you start educating more people. It always amazes me how many people don't know about things. They don't know who TC Walker is. I mean some people don't know that Werowocomoco is right here in Gloucester County or what it is or who it was. Every time you have a chance to educate someone or talk about it and its significance, and then they might go research it, and then they might go talk to someone else. I think that's what community planning is all about. Gloucester's a great place. It's like any other place. It's made of people and people are strange and who they are. I think that Gloucester is- I always say it's in its awkward teenage years. We still don't know who we want to be. I think we're getting there. I think still, though, there's people holding onto the past, don't want any change. People that want to see us grow and become I'm not sure what. [Laughter] I think the two village areas- I think we have a good idea of what we want there; it's the in-between part that we're still working on trying to figure out. We definitely want low taxes, rural character, more jobs [Laughter] clean bay, and utopia.

T: Yeah. Exactly.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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