

Meeting Minutes
Delaware Population Consortium
June 7, 2005
10:30 a.m.
Kent County Administration Building
Dover, DE

In Attendance:

Kelly Crumpley – Kent Co.	Rick Kautz – Sussex Co.
Derrick Lightfoot – City of Wilmington	Ed Ratledge – University of Delaware
Jennifer Leister – New Castle Co.	Barbara Gladders – DHSS
Mike Mahaffie – State Planning Coordination	Don Berry – Dept. of Education
Bruce Sherman – City of Dover	

The meeting was called to order at approximately 10:45 a.m.

DPC Vice-Chair Kelly Crumpley welcomed the members and explained that, since DPC Chair Steve Lee has left the employment of the Town of Smyrna, he has also left the Chair of the DPC. Kelly will become chair and will serve the remainder of Steve's term before starting his own with the next annual meeting. A new Vice Chair will be elected at the next annual meeting.

Review and approval of 2/16/05 meeting minutes

Derrick Lightfoot moved approval of the minutes of the February 16, 2005 meeting minutes. Rick Kautz seconded the motion. The motion carried, unanimously.

Review and discussion of work on the 2005 DPC projections

Ed Ratledge passed out a set of state and county benchmark estimates of population, households, employment and components of growth that will be the basis for the 2005 projection. He noted that he is looking for final input on these data so that he can start creating the projection series.

Ed went through the data with the group and highlighted several factors that he has noticed.

Ed noted that net migration into Kent County has remained somewhat higher than the trend had been. He added that the Kent County migration appears to be similar in the last few years to that of Sussex County. Meanwhile, the rate of migration into New Castle County migration has declined slightly. He said that the evidence suggests population movement from New Castle County to Kent County. That movement may be driven, in part, by differences in land use policy between the two Counties.

There was also a slight slowdown in the growth of employment in New Castle County. That slowdown has gone on long enough to suggest a trend.

Meanwhile, the recent peak in in-migration to Sussex County appears to be slowing down. Ed suggested that this may be due to the demographic factors unique to the baby Boom generation; that generation is beginning to move through the retirement years so growth in retirement migration has begun to slow.

Ed added that records have shown a drop in the demand for seasonal housing, a drop in the growth of rentals, and higher vacancy rates.

Meanwhile, births in Sussex County have started to trend higher than had been expected. Ed noted that it appears that the projections in recent years have slightly overestimated death rates. Because of this, he says he plans to systematically decrease projected death rates slightly.

Over-all, while the statewide totals don't appear likely to change in the next projections series, there will likely be a very slight drop in the growth rate in Sussex County and a small shift of future population from New Castle County to Kent County.

On the employment side, statewide, the population projection series is slightly higher than estimates by the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics, which may lead to some slight adjustment in the next series. Jobs in Kent County showed a slow but steady growth. In New Castle County, job growth is essentially flat. In Sussex County, jobs are positive with a slow but regular growth.

Ed will use these data to run the first cut of a 2005 Population projections series for review at the next DPC meeting.

Don Berry asked about the availability of projections by Census County Division (CCD). Ed explained that he has applied the 2004 projection to the CCDs in work for DeIDOT and that the 2005 projections will be applied to the CCDs after they have been released in the fall.

Follow-up: DPC Web Site

Mike Mahaffie passed around a print-out of two pages from the DPC web site that was created following the February meeting (www.state.de.us/planning/information/dpc.shtml).

Mike noted that he will change the listing of officers. It was also suggested that a page with links to meeting minutes be created.

Follow-up: Data collection work group

Derrick Lightfoot began the discussion with a review of the DPC's desire to set up a procedure for collecting data, in a standard way, across the state to enhance the projections work.

Mike Mahaffie presented a draft memorandum that would request standard reporting of Certificate of Occupancy (CO) data from local governments on a regular basis. That memo text had been shared with the County representatives in the last several weeks.

Rick Kautz noted that collecting CO data from Sussex County may be a problem. He described the county as a "pretty well split-up operation" in which the COs don't have much data on them, but do include a building permit number. He added that the building permits do have more data, but do not include the number of units in a multi-family structure.

He added that, for some municipal areas, the County may not have building permit information for all COs. He said the best source for the needed data would be the county assessment information. That led to a brief discussion of the issues around reassessment statewide.

Kelly Crumpley and Jennifer Leister explained that they had found that most of the requested data is available from the COs for Kent and New Castle Counties.

Derrick Lightfoot called for a statewide, mandated standard for reporting of COs. He suggested that the Consortium make the request and tie it to a review of what is known about COs and the

data they include, for all jurisdictions. Kelly Crumpley noted that local governments may balk at a requirement if it comes from a state agency.

There was general discussion about how the Consortium might state a more general request for information that can be used in the projection work. The following text generally represents consensus:

“A request to each county for a regular report (at least quarterly), by some geography – as small as possible (by modified grid, by school district, by CCD) – of residential units.”

It was decided to not make this request yet, but to continue discussion at the next Consortium meeting.

Meanwhile, each county will look into getting a basic regular update to Ed Ratledge, based on his discussion with each. These data updates would be essentially periodic snapshots of housing in each county, by whatever geography works best for each county, that can be compared over time to give a sense of trends and spatial distribution.

This will also let the County staff look further at what may be possible, given their systems, and that will inform on-going discussions.

Next Meeting

The next meeting was tentatively set for July 12, at 10:00 a.m.

Derrick Lightfoot moved for adjournment. Jennifer Leister seconded the motion and the motion carried, unanimously.