

# Neavitt

## Introduction

This document describes the village of Neavitt, past and present, its location, people, housing, activities, its vision for its future, and outlines the actions that residents believe are necessary to achieve that vision. It has been prepared in an open, transparent process available to all residents and as such represents a consensus of opinion among interested residents.

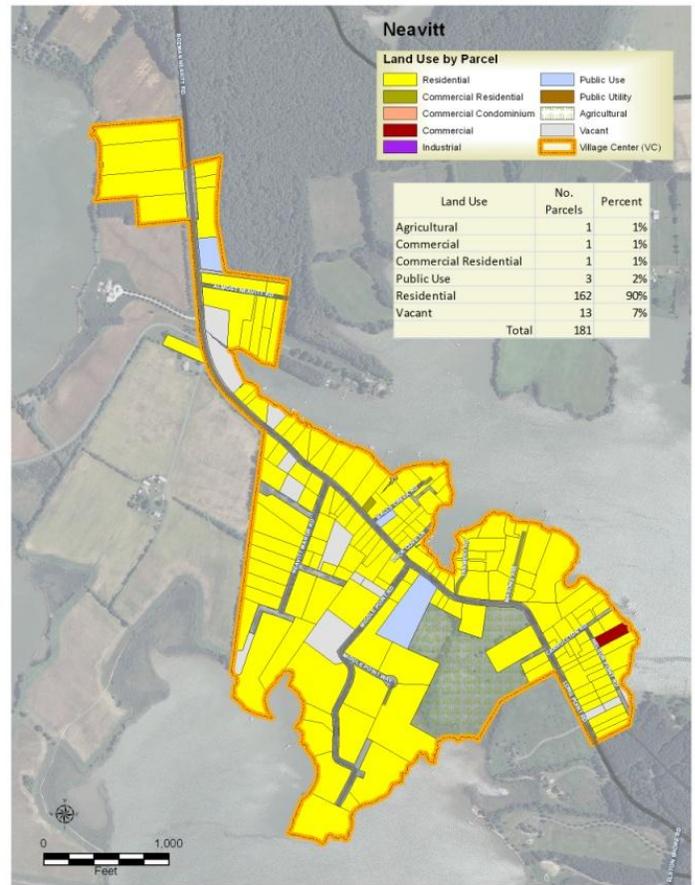
## Characteristics and History

Neavitt is on a small peninsula known as Long Point, which was settled in 1663. The flat land was good for farming and served as a port for local products. Many families in Neavitt have resided in the area since it was first settled, including the descendents of Ralph Elston, whose house, also called Long Point, still stands.

Changes between the year of settlement and 1953 illustrates the economic and cultural changes that have taken place in the village and the through the years. Tobacco, initially the area’s dominant crop, was replaced in turn by wheat, tomatoes and other vegetables, corn and soy beans as the predominant crops.

By the late 1800s, boatbuilding, oystering, fishing and crabbing joined agriculture as the means by which the residents of Neavitt made their living. By the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, some turned to carpentry, making use of skills they’d acquired on farms, in mills or in boatyards.

Neavitt was also a rural retreat for families and sportsmen from Baltimore, Washington, DC, and Philadelphia. As



ferries, trains and cars began to serve the area in the early 20th century, rooming houses in Neavitt grew to serve the demand.

With the erection of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge, greater numbers of families from nearby cities traveled to the area for shorter stays. The vacation industry introduced new, part-time residents to the Eastern Shore. Retirees also began moving to Neavitt, purchasing small parcels of land along the water where they could dock pleasure boats.

Neavitt residents are now divided between full- and part-timers. Many are both, buying property in the village in their 40s or 50s and retiring here in their 60s.

## Location and Activity

Neavitt’s shoreline extends for over eight miles along on a scenic peninsula extending

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into Broad Creek and the mouth of the Choptank River. It is bordered on the west by Harris Creek which separates it from Tilghman Island, and on the east by Balls Creek.

There are approximately 160 homes in Neavitt, most are located in the village center, housing a diverse population of full time and part time residents.

Residents range from all walks of life and vocations. Land use in Neavitt with just a few exceptions is exclusively residential. The two buildings used commercially are a former general store that is used as a workshop and the soft crab processing shed. There are a limited number of lots available for in-fill residential development.

The minimal commercial activity in Neavitt is primarily cottage industries and work-at-home individuals. A dozen or more watermen operate their boats from either the County wharf or from private docks. A family-owned and operated soft shell crab processing business has been operating on Balls Creek for five generations. Cottage industries include a ceramic potter, embroiderer, a tow boat operator, a number of artists and authors, and a home improvement contractor.

Because the village is relatively isolated at the tip of a peninsula, the community is unusually cohesive. This diverse population

shares a common interest in maintaining and nurturing the character and charm that make Neavitt such a desirable place to live.

Residents have formed The Neavitt Community Association, and actively

participate in planning and organizing social activities for the village. Picnics, crab feasts, flea markets, and other events are held annually in the Neavitt Park. Movies, meetings, lectures, and other indoor activities are

held at the community center. The Neavitt Methodist Church regularly hosts bake and soup sales, silent auctions and other activities for the entire community.

Village amenities include:

- The Neavitt Community Center and Post Office. This building replaces the previous post office which was a victim of hurricane Isabel in 2003. When the Postal Service announced it would end service to Neavitt, the Community Association formed a task force to secure restoration of postal service to the village. Ground was broken on July 4, 2007, and the Mason Sheehan Building was dedicated in 2008. Mail service was restored in 2009. Tables, chairs and other accessories fill out the Community Center portion of the building. Movies, CPR classes, lectures, Community Association meetings and other events are regularly held there.
- Neavitt Community park, with baseball field, playground, horseshoe courts,



basketball court, pavilion with picnic tables and a stone fire ring. The Neavitt Post Office and Community Center occupies a portion of the Park property.

- Neavitt United Methodist Church has been and continues to be an integral part of the village. Most recently, along with the other two churches in the Riverview Charge, it has sponsored a CERT course and has purchased an automated external defibrillator (AED) to help prepare the community for emergencies.



- Neavitt’s working watermen, sport fishermen and pleasure boaters all make use of the public landing originally referred to as the steamboat wharf. The one time transportation hub between Neavitt and Baltimore and other locations on the Bay has been both widened and extended and rip-rapped and finger docks were added to create boat slips. In 2010 a bench, dedicated to two of Neavitt’s oldest residents, Joe and Helen Jones, was installed, a nice place to relax and to look out over Broad Creek to the Choptank River.

### Vision Statement

The residents place great value on the contributions of preceding generations in making Neavitt the wonderful place it is today and wish to preserve the village’s

character, and appearance while adopting improvements that will benefit the health, safety and quality of life of residents.

To that end the following are all considered to be contributing and necessary factors:

#### Development

- Maintain the tranquil and picturesque appearance of the village including its traditional housing.
- Maintain the existing density of housing in both the central village and the surrounding open spaces bordering the VC zoned area of Neavitt.

- Ensure that residents affected by building permits, zoning variances, road work, and shore line proposals are proactively notified.
- Enable property owners to economically maintain and upgrade properties while maintaining the character and general appearance of the village.
- Means should be identified and funded to encourage owners of larger properties to adopt conservation easements or other ways to both protect the rural nature of these properties and retain their value for their owners.

#### Commerce

- Allow only commercial businesses that both serve the local community and are consistent with the village’s character, tranquility, and appearance.

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- Support work-at-home enterprises and local cottage industries that are consistent with the village's character and appearance.
- Encourage and support the continued feasibility of commercial watermen working from Neavitt.

### Public Services

- Improve the response time for fire and emergency medical services. Some form of emergency services must be located much closer to Neavitt in order to accomplish this. This is a first priority for many of our older as well as younger residents.
- Insure the maintenance and improvements to infrastructure that will benefit the safety, health, and quality of life of residents. (Roads, telephone, internet, electric power, postal services, storm drainage, wastewater processing, public park, and public landing.) Limit road capacities and speed limits at their current levels.
- There is a concern based on by situations in other villages, that the introduction of sewer lines or large scale wastewater water treatment to Neavitt will ultimately result in excessive development. The preferred alternative is to have the County, State and Federal agencies encourage and to some extent fund alternative methods of processing waste water on site.



### Environment

- Maintain the shoreline and prevent erosion with the least amount of environmental disturbance. Without a healthy shoreline environment, Neavitt would not be Neavitt.

### Community

- Recognize and embrace the benefits of our diverse population which include multi-generation families and recent arrivals, full-time and part-time residents, working people and retirees, and people with a variety of religions and ethnic backgrounds.
- Encourage the maintenance and improvement of structures that contribute to the unique character of the village, such as the former general store or former post office.

- Continue to recognize the contribution of the members of United Methodist Church to the quality of life in Neavitt.

- Continue to hold community events that are organized by and for

residents, such as the flea market, picnic, New Year's crab drop, and bonfires.

- Utilize the Rex Kilbourn building for both postal services and as a community center for community gatherings/meetings and neighborly functions such as movie nights, and presentations by interesting speakers from the region.

