

Crozet Community Advisory Council – Minutes
Thursday, February 21, 2013 from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

CCAC members present: Meg Holden (Chair), Meg West, Phil Best, Bill Schrader, John Savage, George Barlow, Leslie Burns, Nancy Virginia Bain, Mary Gallo, Kim Guenther, Ann Mallek (Board of Supervisors), Beth Bassett, Tom Loach, Kelly Strickland

CCAC members absent: Brenda Plantz, Lucy Goeke

Public attendees: Mike Marshall, Heather Marcel, Kelly Gobble, Jeff Werner, Frank Calhoun, Steve Watson (ACPD), Patsy S. Crosby, Jim Crosby, Jenny Martin, Janice Appelbach, Tim Tolson, Karen Rubendall, Robert Helt

Chair Meg Holden called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

1. Agenda Review (Meg Holden – CCAC chair): Meg Holden welcomed visitors, distributed the agenda, reviewed it with the committee and welcomed any additions. Kim Geunther asked if we could discuss a dog park matter. Tom Loach said that he would like to seek a resolution to support the Fire Department.

2. Approval of Minutes from October 18, 2012 meeting: Bill Schrader moved to accept the minutes as presented, seconded by Phil Best, and the minutes of the October 18, 2012 meeting were approved by vote of the Council.

3. Public Comment: Meg Holden encouraged public comments or questions now or at any time during the meeting.

4. Project Updates/Information:

- **Community Safety with Officer Steve Watson:** Tom Loach introduced Officer Steve Watson of the Albemarle County Police Department (ACPD) by noting that safety was a key topic at the recent Joint Community Advisory Council meeting held on January 14th. There is but one officer assigned to Crozet and western Albemarle, and this area runs all the way to Greene County. At full build-out, this part of the County will be home to between 12,000 and 17,000 souls. At 15,000, the area will have a population that is one-third that of Charlottesville, which has over 100 officers. We do have a share of crime in Crozet, although most is relatively minor. What should we do? There are several possibilities including Citizens on Patrol (a national organization that is like a mobile neighborhood watch). Tom introduced Jim Crosby who, among many other civic activities, is an ACPD volunteer. Tom and Jim then turned the discussion over to Officer Steve Watson.

Officer Watson said that Tom and Jim approached him about organizing a Crozet safety group, which they intended to be different from a neighborhood watch. Because many people are concerned about safety, but do not want to be directly involved with a watch program, Officer Watson said that this program would look toward emergency preparedness, which will also bring about increased public safety. He envisions bringing together a large group of

concerned citizens. If there is a significant safety issue, the group would then contact the ACPD. Over time, one cohesive group would be formed, made up of individual safety groups throughout the community. Bringing so many people together will be a significant project, but recent storms have shown how ill prepared people are. For instance, the ACPD had citizens calling the police to check on their own neighbors, when really people should be prepared and empowered to do this work themselves. Officer Watson believes that people are motivated for the creation of such a security group.

Officer Andy Gluba will be replacing Officer Watson when he is assigned to different area. The ACPD will need a number of volunteers to bring people into groups and see if this is something they want to do. Who is interested? Tom Loach says this is in the discussion phase now, and hoped that as a first step perhaps an article could be run in the Crozet Gazette to gauge interest in doing this. There is data showing that such groups are effective in crime prevention (as opposed to crime solving). The larger group would be a communication vehicle between neighborhoods. The Highlands already has a good group. Ann Mallek asked about the Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) and Officer Watson said that this is a good program and could work with the group he is proposing. A question came from a member of the public about apparent ACPD activities at the library. Officer Watson and Ann Mallek said that this was not in the public arena at this point but that Officer Greg Jenkins will be involved if the matter proceeds.

- Utilizing Development rights as they relate to conservation easements with Jeff Werner of the Piedmont Environmental Council: This topic arose at the Joint Community Advisory Council meeting in January. Tom Loach had expressed concern about the future of those areas lying to the north of growth area, on the north side of Route 240. These are rural now, but are contiguous to the growth area. Can anything be done to reduce the ever-present risk of a comprehensive plan amendment to enlarge growth area? Because all of this land has division rights, Tom asked Jeff to look at possibilities to protect it. In general, it may be possible to encourage such landowners to develop the portion of the property contiguous to growth area by providing them sewer and water, and in return the landowners would encumber the balance of the land with conservation easements. In this way the rural area would be protected and the water supply would be adequately buffered by the conservation easements. The community would then have a plan in place for the contingency that the landowners want to exercise their development rights, and this plan would foster the more efficient use of these development rights. This suggestion is made only for the Crozet growth area. It was noted that the 240/250 connector is not likely to be built any time soon, and so this plan would increase traffic on Route 240.

Tom introduced Jeff Werner from the Piedmont Environmental Council (PEC). Jeff said that there are now 87,000 acres in conservation easement in Albemarle. The County needs places like Crozet for people to live in and take the pressure off the rural areas. PEC has been involved with the neighborhood model, and Tom asked Jeff how to make a green perimeter around Crozet. So Jeff looked at all these tracts around Crozet. Jeff gave a demonstration of how parcels can create additional lots under the current County subdivision ordinance. Division rights are tied to all "parcels of record" that existed at the time of the 1988 downzoning. Each parcel can be divided into five small lots and then as many 21 acre lots as can be configured with

the balance of the acreage. Each lot begets more car trips, more wells and more septic systems. Jeff said that his map of the areas lying north of Route 240 shows fourteen parcels. If they are all single lots (i.e., parcels of record), then 56 new lots can be made, and perhaps more if there are in fact more parcels of record. The number of parcels of record is an official determination made by the County Attorney's office based on a title search and a fee must be paid to have this done. So is it a good idea to pull those lots to the boundary of the growth area? Are there things we want to protect more than others? Would clustering houses in this manner have a negative impact on the existing viewshed? These 14 parcels contain in the aggregate between 700 and 800 acres. Right now the County's Acquisition of Conservation Easements (ACE) program is paying approximately \$2,000 per acre for conservation easements and at that rate protecting these 700-800 acres would cost \$1.5 million to \$2 million. Unfortunately the ACE program is not being funded by the Board of Supervisors, but there is some money (approximately \$700,000) in the program because two landowners who were supposed to sell conservation easements last fall decided not to do so. The ACE program is currently accepting applications for conservation easements purchases using these funds.

Funds for the ACE program were coming from the hotel tax, but this funding was moved from ACE to Parks and Recreation. Ann is trying to have this funding source restored. Jeff then summarized the state and federal income tax benefits for donated conservation easements. Note that ACE purchases easements rather than accept donated ones. These owners could be contacted and Jeff said it is likely that PEC staff have contacted them before. One possibility for funding would be to ask the County to add a new tax surcharge to fund the purchase conservation easements in this viewshed; there is a lot of flexibility to do this. However, protecting the rural area may run up against the desire to see rural areas as income centers. It is possible to conduct small area studies in the rural area to figure out how to protect certain viewsheds. Tom said this subject came up because of a request to bring the mobile home park on Route 240 into the growth area. How protect property rights while stabilizing the northern border of growth area? Tom said that we might prefer a planning device to a political settlement. How incentivize landowners to use their development rights in this way? This plan may accelerate growth, but how good is the unknown? It's a precarious time for the county's rural areas. Tom sees this as a 20 to 40 year issue. Meg H. asked whether this should be looked at by a smaller group. Our Northern Crozet Ombudsman is Nancy Virginia Bain. Tom said anyone interested should talk to him. Jeff said that planning is key and the area must decide what element it wants. Is this a green buffer, a viewshed? What conservation values should be protected? Crozet is well organized and PEC can help if we want to look into these ideas. It was noted that current rules would allow the clustering of lots without water and sewer. Ann pointed out that nothing works better to protect rural areas than making farms profitable. We need strengthen assets for agricultural constituents.

- County Boundary changes – Ann Mallek: This potential boundary change relates to Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) expansion. This is a transportation issue dealing with access to Charlottesville. Today we have resources such as the Jaunt bus, but perhaps, someday, we will have light rail. To have Crozet become part of the MPO means that Crozet would be eligible for federal transit funds; it does not mean zoning changes or changes to Route 250. This is strictly a mapping tool to show the federal transportation authorities where the largest population groups are and provides us in western Albemarle with more opportunities.

This change was effected at the MPO level without reporting back to the Board of Supervisors. Note that Route 250 is scenic and because of this designation it cannot be widened. Route 20 is another such road. There may be changes at certain intersections and spots for safety, but these roads are not going to be four lanes. The designation affords us more transportation options and funding. The MPO includes two county representatives (Duane Snow and Rodney Thomas), two from the City and one VDOT representative. Ann said that the group used to have more members.

- Possible plans for Oakley property: Charlie Schreck had planned to join us but unexpectedly had to be away. Meg H. said she had a positive conversation with him. This property adjoins the Greenhouse property on the north side. Mr. Schreck has met with Mike Marshall and wants feedback. He hopes to join us next month.

- Discuss any information related to thoughts on the possible hotel: Several attendees had participated in a meeting at The Lodge at Old Trail a few nights ago at which the hotel plan was discussed. Meg H. said she and Bill Schrader had tried to get in touch with the new developer at Old Trail (David Brockman is the local manager), but had not been able to yet. We understand that the developers would like to have more plans in place first, but we would like to be more involved earlier in the process. Meg H. spoke with him and he now knows when meetings are and we believe he will be joining us soon. At the meeting a few nights ago, David Hilliard described plans for a boutique hotel to be located near the Lodge and containing 46 rooms, a small restaurant and a bar. This would be helpful especially to families visiting people at the Lodge. Lodging is a perceived need in Crozet and a downtown hotel has been discussed. David thought the market was there for a downtown hotel too. The hotel is expected to open in 2015. A member commented that it would be good to have a trail or walkway connecting the new hotel to the downtown area. Integration with downtown would be helpful. Ann said that she had tried to reach David Brockman through David Hilliard, and Mr. Brockman indicated that he will come to a meeting. For design, the new hotel would mimic the commercial development on the Golf Road corner now, and should be more appealing than the previously planned multi-story condominiums. It is expected to include some park area with hotel and some pedestrian areas.

- Re-cap of January all Councils meeting: The major point in the CCAC breakout session was the issue Tom brought up about the rural area north of Route 240. Tom says we should invite chairs from other growth areas to our meetings. Working together, the leadership from the various teams could develop a growth area agenda. Phil noted that we could send someone to their meetings, serving as liaisons to the other groups. Tom has some contacts and Bill said he would be willing to attend Places 29. These other groups would benefit from our work and us theirs.

- Any news on development of Barnes Lumber Company property: Union Bank had foreclosed on the land and still owns it. The bank is trying to have the property zoned so that more people will be interested. Ann said that with the help of VDOT, we now have Allen and Oak Streets open. VDOT has been very helpful and found original plats showing that these roads were accepted into the system and while not exactly public, could not be closed. VDOT has confiscated chains across these roads twice. People have been dumping trash back there, and this is why the bank put up the chains. People should not dispose of trash there.

- Update on Crozet Library fundraising (Bill Schrader): The contractor is doing well, and is on schedule. They currently anticipate a soft opening in late August and a grand opening in September. Next Wednesday they will start ordering furniture and equipment. The service desk work will be bid to cabinet makers. They have had many in kind donations, including furniture and equipment. As for grant applications, they have \$1,000,000 in proposals out at any given time. The library was turned down for a large one recently, and when that happens they send out the next line of proposals. Two local foundations have donated \$10,000 and \$12,000 and a proposal is going to the Charlottesville Area Community Foundation. Current funds stand at about \$510,000 and there are two other potential gifts that are close to coming through that will change this amount significantly. Senator Hanger and Delegate Landes are also working on a grant. Senator Hanger is working on this in conference. Delegate Landes had done well guiding this through the process and had even made a personal gift. Senator Deeds has also been very helpful. We should know by Sunday if it comes through. Bill asked that everyone help by e-mailing members of the committee. Jane Kulow has sent out an e-mail with the talking points and many contacts have already been made to the General Assembly. Bill reported that the mailer was very effective and led to twenty-five hits per day.

There will be a giving tree in the foyer of the library and Bill passed around a sample of what the leaves will look like. The tree will be permanent and leaves can continue to be added. This is a good way to honor people and forty-seven names are already going to be on the tree. Monthly gifts can accumulate to the giving tree level if a donor doesn't wish to donate the entire \$1,000 at once. Phil B. reminded us of the Lions Club pancake dinner and raffle to be held at the Field School on March 2 as a fundraiser for the library. In addition, the Beautiful Boys contest at Western Albemarle High School later in March will benefit the library (John Halliday, Director of the Jefferson-Madison Regional Library, will be a judge). For the first floor space, the County is planning and preparing an RFP. It is hoped that the space will be shared and that the visitors' bureau will be the anchor. There is also some interest in having shared office space. Staff is considering what to do with the old library and several people have expressed interest, but they need to see if the County has a use for it.

- Developments at the I-64 Interchange: Tom was not aware of any new developments, but this could come back up. Interchange policy came up with the Board of Supervisors, and staff thought that because of infrastructure, there would be more interest at other interchanges.

- Redistricting as it relates the master plan with Karen Rubendall: Karen Rubendall is a parent at Crozet Elementary and said that she was speaking on her own behalf. Ms. Rubendall wanted to be sure that the CCAC was up to date with school issues that result from growth in Crozet. How will we deal with this? She said that she had moved here in 2006 and has been happy about the Crozet master plan, which said that there might be another elementary school built here. She is concerned that students are here but there is nowhere to go. The school division has a long range planning committee that has been examining these issues. With Crozet's planned growth, we could have up to 300 to 600 more students. There are many things involved with enlarging Crozet Elementary. Ms. Rubendall has met with Ann M., Ned Galloway, and others who are concerned about this. How will Henley Middle School and WAHS affected? Many parents at Crozet Elementary are concerned about the middle and high

schools and the impact of more growth on them. Her son is in kindergarten and his class will be huge at Henley. The Long Range Planning Committee wants another high school on Route 29 north, which would pull students from Albemarle High School and then Ivy students would go to AHS. Will growth exceed our capacity? CCAC should talk to the School Board about what we want out here. Citing a University of Michigan study on school size, Ms. Rubendall said that high schools ideally should have 600 to 900 students, which allows for both a full curriculum and for students to be well known by each other. Advantaged kids do well in big schools anyway, but large high schools have been shown to be not as good for disadvantaged kids. Beth B. noted that we can be more creative about this and that we have other buildings here that could be used for school purposes. Tom L. says that education should be integral with the master plan. How parochial do we want to be in the growth area? Long range planning looks at it more globally however.

Kelly Gobble, having served on the superintendent's redistricting committee, talked about these issues. There were several key principles, including modernization of various County schools such as Red Hill, which is outside the growth area, and parity among the schools. All of this is dependent on funding, which is limited. We all agree we need more, and it has not kept pace. Schools in the north of the County are crowded too. We need to consider how to make the most of what we have. The only good news is that the plans exist in the County's Capital Improvement Plan, which contains identified projects that can happen in the next five years, but all need funding. There are three proposals for additions to Crozet Elementary. Between Crozet and Brownsville Elementary School, there are eleven sections of kindergarten in Crozet now and these exceed the number of students in the 2012 graduating class at WAHS. We need to avoid a crisis and so the schools are developing contingency plans, including the possibility of enlarging WAHS. Additions mean more staffing and resources, which helps with disadvantaged kids. The ideal is not to have to redistrict, and have seats for current and expected future students. There is also a plan for another elementary school in eastern Crozet school but this likely will not be considered until needs are not being met. The big problem is that we zeroed out \$100,000,000 in capital plans and we are going to need to find a way to make that happen.

- Update on streetscape: John S. thanked the County's communications staff for doing a great job getting the word out about traffic issues in Crozet. Ann said that a couple of the trees in the Square are going to have to come down for a guy wire. The utilities have worked hard to minimize the loss of trees, but some loss is inevitable.
- Others? Tom L. pointed out an issue with the Fire Department. If a person is a volunteer firefighter in Crozet (or elsewhere) and then is hired as a paid firefighter, that person can no longer volunteer as a firefighter elsewhere in the County. Accordingly a motion was made by Schrader: That the Crozet Community Advisory Council supports a change in the current regulations governing firefighters that county firefighters should be permitted to volunteer as firefighters in the County. Phil B. seconds, and the motion carries unanimously.

5. Old Business: None.

6. Items not listed on the Agenda. Kim will save her matter for next time.

7. **Announcements:** Phil reminded us of the upcoming Lions Club pancake supper.

8. **Future Agenda Items:** Haden Place will be on the agenda for next time. Also, a number of CCAC members are going to rotate off and we need members to renew or to find new members. The three that expire at the end of March are Meg H., Mary Gallo and John Savage. Meg has to be written on. Kelly and Meg need to be specially reappointed.

Adjourned at 9:28 p.m. on a motion by John S. and seconded by Kelly S.

George Barlow
Secretary