

Crozet Community Advisory Committee – Minutes
Wednesday, February 17, 2016 from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Crozet Public Library, Crozet, Virginia

CCAC members present: Dave Stoner (Acting Chair), Mary Gallo (Acting Vice Chair), Phil Best, John Savage, Lisa Marshall, Brenda Plantz, George Barlow, Kim Connolly, Beth Bassett, Leslie Burns, Kim Guenther, Jon McKeon, Jennie More (Planning Commission)

CCAC members absent: Alice Lucan, Susan Munson

Public attendees: Jim Duncan, Mike Marshall, Bill Henry, Emily Kilroy, Sandra Mears, Steve Walsworth, Marilyn Whiting, Christine Koenig, Terry Miyamoto, Teri Kostiw, Michael Morgan, Jackie Morgan, Will Jones, Tim O’Loughlin, Dave Tungate, Erik Hultgren

Chair Dave Stoner called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

1. **Agenda Review** (Dave Stoner – CCAC chair): Dave Stoner summarized the agenda.
2. **Approval of Minutes from the January 20, 2016 meeting:** Subject to any corrections communicated to the secretary within the one week from today, John Savage moved to approve the January 20, 2016 minutes, seconded by Kim Connolly, and the January 20, 2016 minutes were approved by vote of the CCAC.
3. **Blue Ridge Heritage Project (Bill Henry, BRHP):** Bill Henry introduced himself and said that he lives in Dyke in Greene County. He then described the acquisition process for Shenandoah National Park, in which Congress approved establishment of the Park but would not appropriate funds, and so the Commonwealth of Virginia was required to acquire the land. Across the eight counties comprising the Park, some land was purchased (with owners moving willingly) and other land was condemned (with some owners being evicted). The Park is now an economic engine for the region, hosting about 1.2 million visitors a year. Over the years there have been hard feelings about the loss of the land and stories are passed down in families. Although the Park Service initially did not want to work with descendants of former residents, being more focused on natural history, attitudes have changed and there is now a focus on cultural facilities, similar to the focus on the Booker T. Washington site in Franklin County. Mr. Henry said that approximately twenty years ago a group called Children of Shenandoah asked the Park Service to make changes to the film, called “The Gift,” shown at the Big Meadows visitor center because it did not tell the story of how the Park was formed. The Park Service changed the film and accompanying displays to show the contributions of the families whose land became the Park.

Mr. Henry’s grass-roots non-profit organization, the Blue Ridge Heritage Project, wants to install monuments to the sacrifice of these residents. When the Park Service received the land, it tore down or burned most of the houses to keep people from moving back. Many chimneys remained standing and so the chimney was chosen as the symbol for the Blue Ridge Heritage Project. The monument will include a plaque listing the names of families displaced in creating the Park. Madison County, which provided more land for the Park than other counties, had the largest

number of families. Mr. Henry said that they hope to have a pavilion at the monument sites too, for public events, music performances and reunions. The organization has a small budget and so requires a lot of volunteer involvement. He hopes to get many family descendants involved, but anyone with an interest in Park history is welcome. The first public meeting in Albemarle County will be held on March 16. Mr. Henry said that Jim Lillard, a Madison County volunteer, has been very helpful in getting the first monument constructed. The site is at the Criglersville school property, which had been for sale, but the County decided to keep it and the land was developed as a small park. At first they had placed a temporary monument there, but this has been replaced by a stone chimney monument. Mr. Henry asked that people spread the word and get involved. Byrum Park has been mentioned as a possible site in Albemarle. Ultimately they hope to develop a driving trail around the Park to connect the monuments and other historic sites, including the Episcopal and Church of the Brethren missions that were built in and around the Park. Involvement and donations are welcome, and he noted that Madison County was able to get the project done for less than \$10,000, and in less than a year and a half.

4. Project Discussions (CCAC members): Dave Stoner said that the CCAC has hosted presentations by developers on the ReStore-n-Station and Adelaide and these have been discussed a bit, but the CCAC needs time as a group to collect its thoughts on these. What beyond the minutes do we think we should do?

a. ReStore-n-Station: Dave said he had talked to Bill Fritz in the Planning Department, who said that the developer will likely resubmit at the end of February. There will then be more comments from staff, and then the project would likely go to the Planning Commission. John Savage said that he has had a number of people talk with him about this project and they have universally held the opinion that they do not want the expansion to occur. John noted the sixteen hour per day open hours limit that was placed on the site and reminded the CCAC that it is next to a neighborhood. Phil Best said that the sixteen hour constraint is the rule and it appears the landowner does not like it, but Phil noted that the project faced challenges in just getting those conditions. He is concerned about tripling the size of the operation and is opposed to doing anything more at the site, noting that they have not been very good community members. There are also concerns about getting off and on Route 250 because when a resident wants to turn into the two roads adjoining the site, other drivers believe they are entering the station and will pull out in front of the residents. Phil said that there is no legitimate reason to enlarge and change hours.

Kim Connolly noted that even though the zoning in this spot may promote maximizing the use of the property, the Master Plan and Scenic 250 Plan are opposed to that. Members did not like the idea of using suppressed water use as a lever to enable maximum development, and felt that the owner has disregarded the neighbors' concerns. Leslie added that it appears that the owner is attempting to build out as far as possible, and then end up with the original plan that was requested initially. This is a strategic move to end up with what was wanted at first. Mary said that there was a great deal of effort with the first application and the owner has pushed it beyond what was agreed, with operating hours and square footage, the lawsuit, and the restriction against a restaurant. Questions were raised about the water calculations provided by the landowner. John McKeon said that people have told him that the owner should be thankful for what it has.

Kim Connolly recommended that the CCAC pass a resolution tonight because the matter is going to be submitted to the County this month. Jennie More said that the landowner has until the 22nd to get back to the Planning Department and further noted that the land is zoned Highway Commercial. Because the 2009 zoning decision was based on the site's water usage (and particularly recharge) the staff will be looking at water usage in the current plan. It was commented that water usage is connected to the size of the building, and the landowner is arguing that because they are not using as much water as they are permitted, they are entitled to enlarge the building. The owner is also asking for a waiver of the restriction on hours of operation. It was noted that conditions can be imposed in a special use permit. Kim Connolly said that CCAC needs to respond, and Dave Stoner agreed, saying that the project should not go forward as planned. The difficulty is that the zoning is right for the proposed use, and the ultimate decision is based on the water use issue.

Mary Gallo said that she has reviewed the water usage information the applicant has supplied and has many questions. The landowner categorizes itself as a shopping center to determine appropriate water usage and has imposed a correction factor of 25% on usage, assuming that most or all of the usage is by toilets (and they claim their toilets use 25% less water). At the last meeting, Ms. Higgins (landowner representative) said that hosing down a sidewalk doubled their use, and Mary questioned that claim. Dave said that the engineering comment in the Planning staff letter says that their methods look sound. One neighbor noted that she fought this project a long time (in 2009) and worries that if the only issue is water, then there is no fight to be had now. She said that there are other concerns including all night fueling, smell, etc. She also fears that the expansion will lower property values. It was noted that the landowner should address the current set of issues before asking for additional concessions. Phil Best asked whether one can do anything that zoning permits, even if it makes one a bad neighbor? What can we do about noncompliance?

Dave passed around a statement he had prepared summarizing what he believed were the CCAC's concerns and asked that the CCAC mark it up. Another commenter said that he has a plant on Route 29 and attests to the regulations for odors that he has had to deal with. Lisa asked whether the landowner was in fact supposed to gate the property when it is closed, and Dave said that this was not the case, and that signs could indicate closure at night. Jennie said that based on the January CCAC meeting, another public meeting could be requested to provide greater detail on the plan. The landowner must respond to Mr. Fritz's comments by the 22nd and Mr. Fritz has thirty days after that to respond. Mr. Fritz told Dave today that he thought the landowner would resubmit by the end of the month. So, staff comments would come out by the end of March, and by April the landowner could decide whether to go to the Planning Commission, and so May 3 seemed to be the earliest for a Planning Commission hearing. After discussing whether to wait until the next CCAC meeting, John Savage suggested that we review Dave's language and see what we can do, and could always amend later. Leslie said that she liked the emphasis on the Master Plan, which is intended to guide healthy and sustainable growth. Phil Best moved to pass Dave's comments as submitted, and Kim Guenther seconded. Dave said that he would like for Lisa's comments to be included, particularly as to water usage. The CCAC discussed the concern about tapping into the water line across Route 250 and whether that could remove all

objections. The water language was revised and Phil accepted the change as a friendly amendment, and the motion passed unanimously. The resolution is attached as an exhibit.

b. Adelaide Rezoning: It was noted that there would be a Planning Commission work session on Adelaide next week on the 23rd at 6:00 p.m. Staff has provided questions for the session. There will be a work session with the PC next Tuesday, at which the public can speak. The session will focus on questions from the Planning staff, and take public comment, but there will be no vote. Questions have been raised about interpretation of the Master Plan, and the process could move faster depending on the work session. Leslie said that she thought the development is not at the right place. There would be too much traffic and at some point the CCAC needs to recommend that traffic and other infrastructure issues be dealt with before there is more growth. Phil said that he opposes the project on the basis of density, and John Savage said that it is inconsistent with other uses along Route 250 there. Liberty Hall is a mixed density development (Urban Residential designation, predating the Master Plan), but it is across from Harris Teeter. The Master Plan says that the Adelaide property should be predominantly single family (detached). To the County, this means 50%. Should the CCAC focus only on the three questions that the Planning Department will be considering? Give a more complete response later? Wait for the developer to amend the plan? Can we look at those three questions and forward that?

Kim Connolly said that the location of the development is a concern, and worried about traffic safety along this specific part of Route 250. She also noted that the proposed density is inconsistent with other development on this part of Route 250 and with the Master Plan generally. It was noted that the Master Plan encourages single family detached at this location, and the CCAC wished to encourage that use in this location and would recommend denying this rezoning request. Dave said that he wanted to include the Cory Farm's HOA letter and petition with the resolution. Leslie moved to accept Kim's language for a resolution, seconded by Jon Savage, and the resolution passed unanimously. The meeting will be on the 23rd in Room 241 of the County Office Building at 6:00 p.m. and it was recommended that someone from the CCAC attend. Emily Kilroy will advertise the meeting as a CCAC meeting.

5. Transportation Planning Presentation and Discussion (Phil Best and Gerald Gatobu, Principal Planner, Transportation, Albemarle County): Phil said that this issue came to him last summer when a friend commented to him about feeling in danger when riding a bicycle around Crozet. That same day, Phil saw a jogger jump off the road to avoid being hit by a car. Because Phil would like to see Three Notch'd Road improved, he met with Gerald Gatobu to talk about these issues. Mr. Gatobu works with residents who have issues with roads, and so Phil asked Mr. Gatobu if he would come and talk with us about how roads are planned.

Mr. Gatobu noted that much information is in the Master Plan, which describes how our roads are built. He is the County Transportation Planner, and today is his one year anniversary, having previously worked for VDOT. Mr. Gatobu explained that there is a County transportation priority list encompassing all types of projects in the County. The information comes from master plans, long range transportation plans, etc., and it is all combined, including primary and secondary road projects, transit and rail, and enhancement projects. The process of forming the list is coming soon and so Mr. Gatobu said that he would like to see what the

community's (speaking through the CCAC) priorities are now, and then the County can start to look for funding. What are the community's top three priorities? He said it is important to stress the top two or three projects.

They are currently looking at options to slow down traffic on Route 250, and John Savage recommended that the speed limit be lowered to 35 mph from Western Albemarle High School to Fox Chase. Mr. Gatobu said that they would need to do a speed study and see how fast people are going now (and this is the process for setting a speed limit, at the 85th percentile determined by the study). A speed study was recently done there and the County is looking at options for Harris Teeter and Adelaide (there will be traffic impact analysis at the work session on the development). Mr. Gatobu said that the priorities discussion begins each year in January, and we should identify ours by March and report them to him by April. He recommended that the CCAC review the current list and let him know the key projects. The question then becomes the funding mechanism. In setting priorities, they look at safety, congestion mitigation, accessibility, environmental quality, economic development and land use.

Once he has the list, he will know what to emphasize, but of course the key is the limited funding. How do you get your priorities funded? Have you made any investment in the project? Has any money been spent yet? Mr. Gatobu said that the state can provide more funding to complete a project that has already been started. If it meets the criteria above, it is helpful, but it is also persuasive if there has already been some investment, and then the state can provide the rest. While there are big projects (such as I-64 Exit 118 at \$41 million), to smaller projects that can be done more easily. If the County can invest some funding in the project, perhaps for design or study, this investment makes it easier for the County to justify what the project is about and obtain more funding. Mr. Gatobu said that we should demonstrate how a project will help Crozet, economically or as another type of improvement to the community. The County is working on Eastern Avenue because other parties, such as developers, have started some of the work, but the bridge will be the big piece at \$8-9 million. One possibility is to add design features to the roadway to lower the speed. With respect to Route 250, traffic needs to start slowing down further west, near the schools. Are there other avenues to get these types of funding? What about getting public transit here? What about park and ride lots? Mr. Gatobu asked what would come first, the public transit or the park and ride lot to access public transit? He asked because House Bill 2 has funded park and ride lots, and if they are a priority it might be possible to obtain that funding. Once the park and ride is built, they can then bring the transit service. Phil asked about less costly intermediate solutions on Three Notch'd Road, such as a paved shoulder. What can we do incrementally to get this started? Mr. Gatobu recommended that we look at the existing list and think about identifying other priorities.

6. CCAC open seats reminder and officer nominations: John Savage reviewed eligibility rules for the CCAC, and said that if a member is still eligible and wants to seek reappointment (after no more than two terms), one must go on line and reapply. We will also need to elect officers next month to serve for the year starting in April. Volunteers for Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary should contact John. Four seats are open (those held by More, Plantz, Connolly and Barlow).

7. Items not listed on the agenda: Phil says there is a proposal for a building at Yancey Mill Road and asked if the group had heard about it. Dave said that this might be to rebuild the Froehling and Robertson building.

8. Announcements: None.

9. Future Agenda Items:

- a. March 16: Public Meeting – Foothills Crossing/Daily Property Rezoning Process
- b. March 16: Update – West Glenn Project – Powells Creek Stream Crossing

The meeting adjourned at 8:56 p.m.

George Barlow
Secretary