

Crozet Community Advisory Council – Minutes
Wednesday, December 17, 2014 from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Crozet Public Library, Crozet

CCAC members present: Meg Holden (Chair), Jennie More (Vice Chair), George Barlow, Mary Gallo, Beth Bassett, Dave Stoner, Kim Guenther, Leslie Burns, Phil Best, Kim Connolly, Brenda Plantz, John Savage, Jon McKeon, Lisa Marshall, Susan Munson, Tom Loach (Planning Commission), Ann Mallek (Board of Supervisors)

CCAC members absent: None

Public attendees: Ben Girasek, Kali Girasek, Lisa Gaylor, Lisa Woods, Marvin Rankin, Tom Adajian, Chloe Horner, Damon Cassisi, Fred Levering, Nancy Virginia Bain, Jim Duncan, Minal Mistry, Kathleen Mistry, Bevin Cetta Boisvert, Rich Pleasants, Karen Yonovitz. Andrew Gabbert, Paul Grady, Jack Moore, Mack Lafferty, Bill Schrader, Tim Tolson, Mike Marshall, Emily Kilroy, Frank Stoner, Louis J. Lopez III, Gillian Ruffa, Marvin Rankin, Lisa Woods, Lisa Goehler

Chair Meg Holden called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

1. Agenda Review (Meg Holden – CCAC chair): Meg Holden welcomed our visitors, distributed the agenda and reviewed it with the Council, and welcomed any additions.

2. Approval of Minutes from the November 19, 2014 meeting: John Savage moved to accept the minutes of the November 19, 2014 meeting as presented, seconded by Phil Best, and the minutes of the November 19, 2014 meeting were approved by vote of the Council, subject to any corrections given to the Secretary within a week from today.

3. Project Updates/Information:

- Questions for Milestone Partners about current state of downtown development – Frank Stoner: Milestone has provided its response to the CCAC’s generally-worded resolution passed over the summer relating to the Barnes project. It was the CCAC’s intent to keep the dialog open and not yet move toward the rezoning of the property. Jennie More said that this topic will need to remain on the agenda for the next meeting so that we can discuss it fully. L.J. Lopez reported that Milestone has closed its purchase of the CSX property, and could close on the Barnes land as soon as Friday. After the closing, they will be able to focus on real issues, and their response outlines their assessment of upcoming matters. They are committed to working toward these goals for downtown. Mac Lafferty asked about the delay after adoption of the CCAC resolution in July. Mr. Lopez said that they had pulled back on the rezoning, which had been tied to a contract deadline for the property. The contract and rezoning work were not running parallel, and so they stopped the rezoning and focused on the purchase of the land, and will now look toward redevelopment issues. Meg noted that the parking piece is a major issue and plans will need to be developed. It was asked whether the connector under the railroad track on the east end of the property is vital, and Mr. Stoner said that it is very important for commercial activity because it will give options to get in and out of the property. However there

are many challenges in meeting VDOT requirements as to deceleration lanes, sight distance, etc. Despite its great cost, this access, if built, may not provide truck access, but cars could use it. Note that the Route 240/250 connector to Cory Farms would be located further east. The bridge for the 240/250 connector will be expensive, and because it is unlikely that developers will be able to provide the funding, Ann said that the connector is a long-term aspiration at this point. Dave said that the developer, County and community need to look at this as a collaborative effort to solve these problems.

Susan Munson asked about the process to communicate these ideas to the developer. It was noted that CCAC members may talk with Mr. Stoner, but that we need to be mindful of the open meeting laws and remember that any assembly of more than two members needs to be noticed and documented as a public meeting. This topic will likely be on the agenda for some months to come, and CCAC members and the public can bring their ideas to this meeting. Mr. Stoner will seek input on some of the public spaces and it is possible to talk to Milestone directly if you have particular ideas.

Dave said that we could advertise and hold public input meetings or design workshops to discuss the community's desires for the site, such as a parking deck or design concepts. Jennie asked that CCAC members report back to the CCAC the results of any meeting they have with Milestone, and that they be mindful that in such meetings they do not represent themselves as speaking on the CCAC's behalf. Mr. Lopez said that they want to get an executable plan because so much of what we've done so far is a vision, and while in fact distinct, the two are commonly interchanged. He believes that we are fairly close on the vision, but there remains a great deal to do on the plan. So Milestone will be focusing on the plan and get to specific parcel development.

Meg asked that the public let us know if there are particular topics that should be discussed. Mr. Stoner noted that we should not underestimate the importance of where we are today. After the Barnes closing occurs, they will have consolidated the CSX and Barnes properties. Milestone and its patient capital wish to build something special that will be responsive to the community. He said that this is a huge step forward, both for Milestone and Crozet. Leslie asked about the ability to deal with the parking, access, and train issues by "digging down." Can there be below grade parking and access (particularly under the track on the east end)? Mr. Stoner said that there is industrial access funding, but it is necessary to have a business ready to use the access in order to qualify for the funding. Mary asks if they have reached out to other businesses in Crozet about this. Mr. Stoner said that they have not had a business roundtable (perhaps with the Board of Trade?) yet but possibly could do that because these issues are relevant to other businesses in the area.

- Update and questions about wind energy business – Rich Pleasants: Mr. Pleasants reported that they had received a purchase contract from Milestone on a portion of the Barnes property for the manufacturing business, but Mr. Pleasants and his investors decided not to pursue a counteroffer because they could not agree to the proposed terms and conditions (they will be going to the old Mohawk site in Augusta County). However, the renewable energy academy is still looking at potential space in Crozet and they will respond to the RFP for the old train depot. Mr. Pleasants said that they would want a lease term longer than two years, and so

they are looking at other spaces too. Jennie asked about the space downstairs in the library. However, it is only 1,000 square feet and the academy will need more space and more than two years. However, Mr. Pleasants noted that they will also want to build, and so after two years will be looking to build or rehabilitate an existing space. He hopes that the County will consider a longer lease term for the depot. Mr. Pleasants was asked how many students will attend the academy. He responded that they expect to have students from the area and around the United States, together with international clients, taking courses, some of which will be online. There will also be more trade-based courses, such as home automation, wind power, gray water usage, etc. Will there be enough parking? Mr. Pleasants said that the average class size is expected to be fifteen students, and hopefully people can walk to the academy. It would have been ideal to have the manufacturing plant downtown so that students could park there, but hopefully they can work out the parking. Class times would be in the day and should not conflict with restaurants. He said that at this point there are no other sites in Crozet under consideration for the manufacturing facility, but had looked at others over the last couple of years. The Mohawk plant in Waynesboro/Augusta County is on the railroad and has access to the interstate and so he will go there.

Mr. Pleasants encouraged the CCAC to continue to push for business uses in Crozet. He said that the Acme site was a possibility, except that it will not be available soon enough. The Mohawk plant is 300,000 square feet and they will divide it up for use by other businesses as well. Augusta County would like to see the academy there too, but they are offering 30,000 square feet, which is too much for now. He hopes to visit the Crozet depot over the holidays. The plan for the academy is to provide a way to train people on an emerging market so that they can get the necessary skills without having to go to college. It will also provide financing for students. He plans to offer instruction to the new Environmental Academy at Western Albemarle High School. Phil asked how much space he needs, and Mr. Pleasants said that he requires at least 2,000 square feet for a couple of people at the onset, but up to 10-12 employees later. He may also place some research and development staff in the building too. He said that there are two other potential buildings for the academy in Crozet. It was noted that the old flower shop/ABC building is too small. Mr. Pleasants said that he needs to start the project this winter. Noting that she did not intend to discourage other interested parties from responding to the RFP for the depot space, Jennie made the following motion: The CCAC is encouraged by Mr. Pleasants' plan for the renewable energy academy and expresses its support that he will be able to locate his business in Crozet. Phil Best seconded the motion and it carried 14-1.

- Crozet Artisans need to secure a new location in Crozet – Kathleen Mistry: Ms. Mistry explained to the CCAC that the Crozet Artisans opened their shop in October in the purple building (the former dog grooming business) near Crozet Pizza. Since then, they have had a great deal of support. They support twenty artisans and have had to turn others away because they do not have adequate space. Shortly after opening, they learned that as of December 31, they will be unable to use the purple house for the gallery. So, they have looked at the Crozet train depot as a potential new space and called Susan Stimart. Ms. Mistry said that she understood that at its July meeting, the CCAC discussed the potential use of the depot as an art gallery, information center or shared space. Ms. Mistry proposes to share the space as an artisan gallery and tourist information center. If 250 square feet are used for the information center, the remaining square footage will still double the space for artisans, and would allow for

demonstrations, performance space, etc. She said that this use would allow the community to have more access to the arts and it would contribute to the small town feel of Crozet. It would also add revenue, allow community access to the building, and support small business. There is also support for this use from the state Artist Guild, and it would be part of the Artisan Trail. Ms. Mistry reported that they held an open house last week with good turnout and sales. She asked for the CCAC's support for the endeavor. The business is organized as a limited liability company, but operated in a manner similar to a cooperative. The artisans staff the store and receive a percentage for their sales.

Jennie made the following motion: The CCAC is encouraged by the Crozet Artisans' success in Crozet and expresses its support that they will be able to locate their business in Crozet. Dave Stoner seconded the motion and it carried 15-0.

Jennie also reviewed the criteria provided by the County for the RFP, which reflected the CCAC's hopes for the building. Ann said that there will be a public hearing on the use of the depot, and the County staff will use these criteria to evaluate the proposals. Dave reiterated his comment from the summer regarding the market rate criterion for the space. He noted that the County can do many things to encourage development, and so he disagrees that it must be a market rate. Dave said that it may be appropriate to offer a below-market rate if the tenant is the right business for the space and Crozet. Bill Schrader said that the County has approved locating the adventure outpost in the library lobby in April, as part of the long-term plan by the Charlottesville-Albemarle Convention and Visitors Bureau. The plan has been in place for eighteen months. The outpost will be a high tech information center with screens, etc. and will fit in the small space. It was noted that a similar use might be possible in the depot, without the screens and other high tech features.

- Downtown Zoning Form Presentation – Tom Loach: Tom asked the CCAC to recall Ron Higgins's presentation about Zoning Text Amendment #ZTA201400003 in which the County incorporated County-wide certain language from the Master Plan, and gave a presentation about the form that the zoning ordinance can take. This form of development is called new urbanism or the neighborhood model and is best illustrated using various redevelopment scenarios. Tom then skipped over various textual explanations and showed slides depicting how this form of development works. The first was of Berkmar Drive, depicting a strip mall with the parking lot in front. What could this redevelop into? A succession of slides showed changes including streetscaping, and buildings with bottom-floor commercial and residential on top. Buildings are moved to the road, with tree-lined sidewalks, making it more pedestrian friendly. Tom noted the differences in form, and asked us to think about the long term in Crozet as we redevelop. If we can keep development off of Route 250, this form might be possible for the downtown. Tom said that there has been talk of rezoning the area along Route 240 from the firehouse to Con Agra to mixed use commercial. He said that this was not done for the Master Plan, but times change and new possibilities emerge. The slides show the form that can occur under the current zoning text. Tom then showed slides depicting possibilities for Albemarle Square, noting that these principles could be applied to Crozet. They are consistent with the neighborhood model we have been working on and demonstrate why the County has invested so much time and effort into this model. One commenter recommended that people visit the area around the Whole Foods in Short Pump, or Clarendon in northern Virginia,

to get an idea of how this can ultimately work. Old Trail is based on a similar model. Leslie said that these slides show how this process can work over time, and that these changes do not all occur at once. Dave asked where the cars go in these examples. Do they go in the back? In parking structures? Tom says that in Clarendon, they have relegated parking behind the buildings, typically in a garage. Tom noted that this street type also causes cars to drive more slowly. He also said that you can see the progression of amenities as you move from Highlands, to Western Ridge, to Waylands Grant, especially in the use sidewalks and curb and gutter. The more recent developments have more such amenities. Ann said that in these examples vertical mixed use means different uses on each floor, while horizontal mixed use put different uses in different buildings. In these pictures, it is hard to tell the two apart and so both are possibilities.

- Clarification of Mission Statement – Bill Schrader: Bill then led the CCAC on a discussion of the guiding principles for the CCAC and the vision for the Master Plan. He noted that the CCAC is charged with working toward Master plan implementation and not advancing individual interests. We should always ask how a particular action fits the Master Plan. With respect to meeting with special interests, we need to be mindful of the issue of getting information back to the larger group. In meeting with special interests, we need to take care not to get into Master Plan issues because we are representing the CCAC and cannot speak on its behalf. Beth then provided the statement attached hereto, noting that she wants the CCAC to better define what we do. Dave endorsed Bill's comments and the group expressed its appreciation for Beth's insights on the CCAC's role and responsibilities.

Mr. Stoner noted that the review and update for the Master Plan is set for 2015. Emily Kilroy said that given all the County's priorities, it is not likely to happen that soon. Ann said that if there are issues that we need to start thinking about, to let the County know. Currently there is no funding in the capital improvement plan for the master plan updates, and it would be good for communities to write in about this at budget time to request funding for these projects.

- Information sharing about meeting with County staff regarding economic development and how CCAC can promote/advocate for businesses, new and existing: Dave, Jennie and Kim met with representatives from the County staff and Tim Hulbert (Chamber of Commerce), and notes from the meeting were sent out to the CCAC. Emily has created a potential action list. Dave noted that while we have been listening about businesses coming to Crozet, we still need more information about the business climate here, the area's needs, and how to encourage businesses to grow here. What is Crozet's potential as a business location? So that the CCAC can be better informed as a group, the purpose of the meeting was to find out what the County is doing or planning to do for business development. They can then provide this data to the CCAC to help us understand what is realistic for Crozet. Returning to Bill's comments, Dave asked about business development activities in Crozet and how they are carrying out the Master Plan. What have we done so far? The attached list prepared by Emily comes from this discussion. Dave suggested that we review the appendix to the Master Plan and determine whether these really are the priorities. What does the CCAC need to know in order to make informed decisions? It was recommended that we continue this discussion next month.

- Discussion about various topics that members would like to take on as an area of focus: Due to time concerns, this discussion was postponed to the next meeting.

- Dentist presenting to group about idea for the Moose Lodge: Due to time concerns, and because no one was present to lead the discussion, this topic was postponed.

4. Items not listed on the Agenda: Beth said she had noticed that the Gateway Market is for sale. It is zoned prime commercial, contains 2.56 acres, has utilities, and has approval for a 30,000 square foot building. All types of retail activities are mentioned in the listing as permitted. It was noted that this property was approved for these uses many years ago.

Emily said that she had been asked about the grading that is occurring in Old Trail and said that they are only re-grading the land and that there is no construction. This activity is allowed under their erosion and sediment control permits.

5. Announcements: None.

6. Future Agenda Items: Send any future agenda items to Meg.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

George Barlow
Secretary

I felt extremely unsatisfied at the end of our November meeting with what we accomplished and also my personal inability to accurately convey my feelings on the issues at hand. So I have written my thoughts to read to you this evening.

I feel the next most important mission of the CCAC in the coming meetings should be to define our scope and charge as individuals and as a group. Here is my opinion: To the best of my knowledge we are an oversight group charged with upholding and interpreting the Crozet community's master plan. We are to do this with input from the community in monthly meetings and sometimes special meetings when necessary. Working beyond this in special groups is outside our scope and purpose.

We are volunteers with varied interests, backgrounds and strengths. We use these qualities to our advantage to educate ourselves and the group about current events that are of interest to our community. As a group we listen to and represent the various concerns and interests of all of the people of Crozet. We need to let the developers make plans, have designated members who report to us on those plans (along with the developers themselves) and continue to let the master plan be our guide. In the case that it is time for an update of the Master Plan, which I feel it may be, we need to lead the community in helping us redefine our vision. We can work from the current Master plan to celebrate our successes and develop our path for the future.

As I have done in the past, I will gladly report to you on matters involving education by attending PTO meetings, connecting with parents and administrators, reviewing future redistricting efforts by the School Board (there is a county wide redistricting coming in the spring) and reporting back to you here. As a Small Business owner who has added two (non-retail) employment positions in the last six months and plans to add a third in the spring, I will also bring to the group any concerns we may have in the future.

Responsible growth is slow, yet sometimes projects come upon us quickly. Let us refocus and not waste time on doing the jobs of others. Instead let's continue to report, review and oversee.

CCAC Possible Activities

- Identify sites with opportunities
 - Identify constraints
- Identify community “appetite” for impacts
 - Noise
 - Traffic volumes
 - Traffic types
 - Odors
- Community Asset Identification
- SWOT Analysis
- Identify what types of businesses are successful in Crozet
- Identify what types of businesses are successful in towns similar to Crozet
 - Location
 - Size
 - Highway access
- Identify target industries
 - What do they need?
 - Infrastructure (transportation, water/sewer)
 - Real estate
 - Zoning
 - Access
 - Setbacks
 - Natural resources (eg. water)
 - Access to suppliers
 - Access to customers
 - Workforce
 - Impact “appetite”
 - On sites that might be suitable per the above, what is community appetite for associated:
 - Noise
 - Traffic volume
 - Traffic type
 - Odor
- Identify major property owners/key properties – engage in conversation