

Crozet Community Advisory Council – Minutes
Wednesday, February 18, 2015 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, Leslie Burns, Phil Best, Kim Connolly, Brenda Plantz, John Savage, Phil Best, Jon McKeon, Lisa Marshall, Susan Munson, Ann Mallek (Board of Supervisors)

CCAC members absent: Kim Guenther, Tom Loach (Planning Commission).

Public attendees: Mike Marshall, David King, Jim Duncan, Tim Tolson, Rachel Falkenstein, Andy Slack, Bevin Boisvert, Adeola Dokun, Rob Gutkowski, Stuart King, Ali King, Carrington King, Emily Kilroy, Jacqueline Washington (Piedmont Baptist Church), Clover Carroll, Tim Spicer, Darlene Birchfiel, Jim Birchfiel, Frank Stoner, Susan Stimart, David Farrell, Paul Grady, Karen Moore, Nicholas Castle, Dale Castle

Chair Meg Holden called the meeting to order at 7:01 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. Meg said that Dr. Shoeb was unable to attend the meeting and so we would discuss the Moose lodge building at a later date. Meg also asked, and the CCAC agreed, that we would hold elections before ombudsmen discussion.

2. Approval of Minutes from the January 21, 2015 meeting: We will approve the January minutes at the next meeting.

3. Project Updates/Information:

- Preliminary discussion about name changes for some streets in Crozet – Andy Slack, who is Albemarle County’s GIS Specialist II, appeared before the CCAC to discuss the naming of certain roads in Crozet. He explained that the Master Plan shows five roads to be connected as development in the growth area progresses, but as it stands now, different sections of the roads have different names. He came to our meeting to begin the conversation to determine whether and how to reduce each road to one or two names. For instance, the road from Western Ridge into Crozet, when completed, will progress from Park Ridge Drive, to Hill Top Street, to Library Avenue. The most significant impact is that residents may have to change their addresses, and this particular route could affect 15 houses in Western Ridge, 32 in Parkside Village, and the Library itself. Mr. Slack said that one option is to have two names for the street and have it change at a clear intersection. There was then discussion of how the proposed 240-250 connector would impact this issue, noting that the road is likely to be built (at least on the north side of Lickinghole Creek) as Foothills Crossing is developed. It was noted generally that we would want to do this with as few problems as possible. Mr. Slack said that it was not necessary for the CCAC to come to a decision tonight, but that he wanted to alert us to the issue so that we could start thinking about solutions. It was asked whether it would affect anyone now

if we chose to have the road's name change at a key intersection, and Mr. Slack said that it is difficult to determine this because we do not yet know where all the homes will be located. While it is unclear when the connector ultimately will be built, the County is currently reviewing site plans that include the connection from Park Ridge to Hill Top, and it was noted that last month we heard from the applicant for the middle portion of the road. The timetable of that construction affects this issue. It was noted that we want a solution that would require as few property owners as possible to have to change their addresses. Mr. Slack said he thought that the library would be the only building affected to the west of Hill Top. It was mentioned that the name change could occur where the 240-250 connector comes in, but it is not clear where this will be. Ann asked about guidelines for the lengths of roads, and Mr. Slack said that these only really come into play when new roads meet existing ones (if the intersection is offset by more than 60 feet the County wants the streets to have different names). Once the community is reasonably aligned on this, the County would contact the property owners regarding the use of the names. The street potentially could have as many as three sections in an effort to cause as little disruption as possible.

- Presentation about request for Special Use Permit to allow for continued polo matches at King Family Vineyards – David King: David King distributed to the CCAC copies of his special use permit (SUP) submission to the County, explaining that in 2004 when the polo field was built, they had obtained a SUP for the Pink Ribbon Polo cancer benefit hosted by the vineyard. This SUP expired by its terms last year. Mr. King said that he is now involved at the state level with the General Assembly pursuing legislation that will allow wineries to classify certain on-farm activities as agricultural activities. He noted that much work has been done in the last four or five years to allow farms other than wineries engage in various activities characterized as agricultural, and that Albemarle County has taken the lead in changing its ordinance to allow certain on-farm activities. Mr. King said that he wishes to clarify the activities that King Family Vineyard is allowed to host. He approached the County with the question and staff recommended that the Vineyard apply for a SUP to make it clear that they are complying with the local ordinance. He noted that this application is not in response to an enforcement issue, rather they have voluntarily come to the County for clarity. Mr. King said that he hopes the SUP can be granted for an indefinite in time (the old one had a five year term), but the County staff has not made its recommendation yet. This SUP would permit the same activity that has been occurring for the last ten years.

On Sunday afternoons from late May to mid-October, the Vineyard opens to allow Charlottesville Polo Club matches to be watched by others. The matches are made up mostly of local players, no admission is charged, and they try to keep the events as relaxed as possible. The matches occur on a part of the farm that technically is not part of the winery, but for ABC purposes, the whole farm is the “premises.” They sell wine and shirts around the edge of the field. Mr. King said that they have asked for the SUP to permit a population limit of 1,000 persons, which is half of the old SUP's limit of 2,000 for Pink Ribbon Polo. On a typical day, they have between 400 and 500 people and between 150 and 200 cars. While holiday weekends attract larger crowds, he noted that polo is only played weather permitting because of danger to the horses and players. He said that space for parking not an issue; they have lots of room.

Mr. King said that they have started hiring two traffic control officers to work at the winery gate, so that cars can be moved off of Half Mile Branch Road as quickly as possible. Guests are respectful of the farm; they do not put out trashcans and spectators are required to remove their own trash. They have no announcer or music (which they did have that with Pink Ribbon Polo, but they are not asking for that now). He said that there would be no changes to how the events are run, and they would like to continue. Mr. King was asked why they are reducing the number of spectators. He said that in working with County staff when they applied for the first permit, they had traffic studies done and the numbers determined by the old study showed this new request to be logical; it was not necessary to permit the larger events. The events begin at approximately 10:00 a.m. and end around 4:00 p.m., and they have been hosting these on Sundays for ten years now. Mr. King said that the matches are popular with the public, but the problem is that there are not many polo players these days. It was noted that the SUP runs with the land not the owner.

Mr. King was asked if he had any information on the traffic on Half Mile Branch Road now. Mr. King said that the County may have that, but his impression is that he sees more traffic on the road now due to growth in the area generally. He thought that perhaps the staff was inclined to have a lower attendance number to match road use. It was noted that Piedmont Baptist Church does let out at the same time as the spectators arrive. In response to a question about making improvements to the road, Mr. King said that there has been a proposal to widen it (the family having been approached by VDOT because of their frontage on the west side of the road), but it is far down the list of priorities, and Ann confirmed that there is no funding now and that it is not in the six year plan. Mr. King noted that widening the road may lead to even more speeding there. It was also noted that the only downside to the SUP is the traffic on the road, as the polo activities likely cannot be seen from other properties, and there is no noise. Mr. King said that the land is under conservation easement now; it could have had up to 27 units, and the traffic study was done in part to measure the impact on the road if they had developed it (the development would have generated as much traffic as a polo match, but every day of the year).

Mr. King was asked how they would control attendance if the 1,000 person limit was exceeded. Mr. King said that he did not have a solution for that tonight, but that their experience is that they average 400 to 500 spectators. If they routinely exceeded 1,000 people, it might become unmanageable for them. He also said that the matches are somewhat self-limiting because of the weather, heat, etc. Mr. King said that he was not aware of any complaints, and they have had the traffic guards there for the last two years. They stand in the middle of the road and slow down traffic coming from both sides. A neighbor who has lived nearby for two years commented that they have never been inconvenienced by matches and that neither traffic nor noise is a problem. Another neighbor commented that there is more traffic on the Hillsboro side, but that the traffic issues nearer to Hillsboro are due to more traffic generally and not this activity. John Savage noted that this is a good example of agri-tourism, and that it fits with our goals for the area. Ann said that appearing before the CCAC is a required step for the SUP process and this would next got to the Planning Commission (the County's process requires a public introduction to the project). The applicant needs to hear any questions or issues from us (the public). Mr. King has been involved on the State Wine Board for 6-7 years, and he noted that each governor includes development of the wine industry in the administration's economic development program.

Can these activities be timed with Piedmont Church activities? It was noted that it can be hard to exit from the church during polo events, and that church departure is usually around 1:00 p.m. Noting the speeding issue generally, it has been suggested that the County Police step up speeding enforcement on Half Mile Branch Road, and area residents have tried to have the speed limit reduced there. Tim Spicer lives near King Family Vineyard and noted that he has been approached by the Kings, and they have been very forthcoming. His driveway is the first one to the south side toward Yancey Mills. He noted the limited sight distance when pulling out, but also said that this issue was not specific to the SUP and that the events do not affect him except for the traffic. He said that it is more of a problem with the road itself, and his concern is two-fold. How can the number of spectators be controlled? Perhaps they should use a lower maximum number if the 400-500 is an average. But how can they monitor this? Mr. Spicer thought perhaps more traffic control, either with County officers or contractors, could help. It was noted that traffic sometimes backs up on the road, creating a concern for emergency vehicles. It was also commented that these events are a key Crozet attraction at a landmark. Susan Munson asked Mr. King if they advertised and he said that they do not, except on their website to let people know they are having a match. Perhaps more traffic control would help with exiting from the church as well. It was noted that residents south of the winery see a lot of traffic, but this is a general traffic issue and not necessarily an issue with the activity.

Mr. King noted that the presence of traffic control contractors at their entrance does slow down the traffic, and he suggested that they might consider leaving them in place for a set period of time at the winery's expense, which would help deter speeding at least in their section of the road. Ann said that she will mention the issue to Chief Jenkins. It was also noted that the traffic is worst on weekday mornings, and the church is concerned because of the short cut between Jarman's Gap Road and Route 250. Beth Bassett suggested that this would be a good topic for the Coffee with a Cop event at Mudhouse next week. John Savage said that he felt that the sense of group was that we approve of the activity, but we are concerned about the road more generally. The Council was asked to share any other concerns with the applicant and County staff, and Ann noted that there will be a public hearing on the SUP. The matter will come up under special events and not agribusiness because that change has not been made to the ordinance yet. Mr. King said that they will add more hours of traffic control.

- Follow up from January meeting regarding Economic Development – Susan Stimart: Ms. Stimart said that the list of potential CCAC activities to further economic development that we provided was impressive and inspiring, and thanked the Council for that work. From her review of the action list, she recommends that a subcommittee of a few people be established to work together to address some of the community economic development considerations, and that this work would include interaction with the new economic development director, who arrives in April. Ms. Stimart then reviewed Crozet's many economic development resources. She said that we will need to explore who the future partners might be. There are grant possibilities and there have been some successes already with those, including the Department of Housing and Urban Development grant for the Monticello Artisan Trail (shared with Nelson County to develop a website and dedicated marketing materials identifying 100 locations). This program has subsequently been rolled out statewide. The HUD grant was a success in that it provided an immediate product for the Convention and Visitors Bureau. Ms. Stimart said that there may be other projects, such as the adventure outpost, that could generate

such a product for CACVB. There may also be funding to help with development of a hotel on the Barnes site (Virginia Resources Authority and others). In response to a question about the possibility of the County providing tax waivers as a development incentive, Ms. Stimart said that they have looked at this for certain areas of county but have not done it. A technology zone is one of the better ways to provide tax relief (the City of Charlottesville uses this). It is a zoning overlay for technology, and gives a 50% reduction on BPOL taxes. We would want to look to as many state incentives as possible, including the Virginia Economic Development Partnership and the Virginia Jobs Investment Program. Ms. Stimart said that another brewer is interested in locating to Albemarle County. She noted that many economic development ideas can be mapped out by the County's GIS team using demographic and employment data, and that it helps to see these possibilities for economic development.

Ms. Stimart said that, as noted on our list, we need to get community involvement and the subcommittee should start on this to determine the community's preferences as to scale and other factors. Getting an idea of this sense of scale can help to eliminate uses that are not appropriate for the area. John Savage noted that the Freedom of Information Act, meeting notices, and other formalities will be an issue for such a subcommittee, but it will have the goal of obtaining widespread community input. Mary Gallo noted that the CCAC has been seeking this input on an ongoing basis, as envisioned by the Master Plan. Should this be discussed as part of the periodic Master Plan review? Meg Holden said that she believes that these questions are more specific and pertain to the things the community wants in order to grow. Meg said that we need to be more proactive and identify what we want. Ms. Stimart noted that we also need to think about the scale. Ann also said that these discussions are intended to be more specific than the recommendations in the Master Plan, and would include questions like "Do we want an outdoors store? An arts and crafts store?" Dave said that this discussion needs to focus specifically on economic development and the types of commerce we want, such as manufacturing, retail, services, and office space. Kim Connolly noted that the Master Plan appendix says that we need a marketing plan for various targeted areas around Crozet and that this needs to be done as well because it is important for growing existing businesses. Kim has talked with Milestone representatives about what is appropriate for the Barnes property and the same is likely happening with Old Trail. There was general support for having more County economic development staff to help with this work.

- Discussion about Milestone Partners hosting a series of public meetings regarding key points of development on the former Barnes Lumber property – Frank Stoner: The suggestion was made that the Crozet Community Association could be the home for this dialog.

- Elections: The CCAC held officer elections for the coming year. The nominating committee, chaired by John Savage, reported the nominees. Jennie More was elected chair and George Barlow was elected secretary on motion made by Phil Best, seconded by Susan Munson. Motion carried unanimously. An election for vice chair was held among Mary Gallo and David Stoner. By majority vote, David Stoner was elected vice chair.

- Review of "ombudsman" roles and discussion about which areas members would like to focus on: Because the meeting time was over, this discussion was moved to the next meeting.

4. Items not listed on the Agenda: None.

5. Announcements:

- Blue Ridge Patrol District will be hosting a Coffee with a Cop event at the Mudhouse in Crozet on February 26, 2015

- Reminder that the next CCAC meeting will be held at The Meadows on Wednesday, March 18, 2015.

- Tim Tolson said that the next Crozet Community Association will be on March 12 for Ann's Town Hall meeting, to discuss the budget. The meeting will be at the Field School.

- The Crozet Independence Day Celebration will be held on Sunday, July 5.

6. Future Agenda Items:

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

George Barlow
Secretary