

Crozet Community Advisory Council – Minutes
Thursday, February 20, 2014 from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
The Meadows, Crozet, Virginia

CCAC members present: Meg Holden (Chair), Nancy Virginia Bain, George Barlow, Beth Bassett, Meg West, Phil Best, Kim Guenther, Ann Mallek (Board of Supervisors), Tom Loach (Planning Commission)

CCAC members absent: Mary Gallo, Jennie More, Bill Schrader, Branda Plantz, Janice Applebach, Leslie Burns, John Savage

Public attendees: Mike Marshall, Tim Tolson, David Stoner, Cari McCormick (UVA Nursing), Yi Qin (UVA Nursing), Paul Grady, Kim Connolly, JoAnn Perkins

Chair Meg Holden called the meeting to order at 7:08 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. Members of the Council introduced themselves. Paul Grady said that he had an issue to discuss later in the meeting. It was determined that a quorum of the CCAC was not present.

2. Approval of Minutes from the January 16, 2014 meeting: Due to a lack of quorum, approval of the minutes was postponed until the March meeting.

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

4. Project Updates/Information:

- **Library Updates:** Tim Tolson reported on the popularity of the new library and encouraged everyone to support the regional library operating budget (which includes funds for extended hours) that has been submitted to the County Board of Supervisors. Circulation continues to increase, with each month's percentage increase being greater than that of the previous month. The recent Exam Cram for Western Albemarle High School students was a success, and Tim noted that the librarians volunteered their time for this successful project. He suggested that we send email the BOS to support the budget. The fourth annual Salute to Swing Dance will be held on March 29 at the Field School as a fundraiser for the library, fire department and rescue squad. An article is forthcoming in the Crozet Gazette. Also Fardowner's will be hosting Fardowner's Days April 14-16, during which a percentage of the food bill will support the library.

- **CCAC Officers and Membership Renewals:** This topic was postponed due to lack of quorum.

- **Streetscape issues, including how we can support local businesses during this time:** The project has been delayed because of the weather, and the Tabor Road closing will not begin on

February 24 as they had planned. Ann said the County has worked hard to clean up the detour area and it is hoped that the road will be closed for as short a time as possible. The groundbreaking has not yet been scheduled. Meg asked residents to help businesses by continuing to patronize them. Brenda Plantz said that Parkway Pharmacy would deliver to their customers when they can do so.

- Acme Visible Records status: No one had an update, but buildings are being removed. Meg Holden said that she is trying to get their representative to come to a CCAC meeting. Tim noted that they do have to have a public comment period about their remediation plan but was not sure when it would be held.

- Mint Springs – Closed during snow – Tim Tolson: Tim reported that several people called him because they were used to sledding there. The Parks Department told Tim that they had to close for safety reasons because the pond had been drained. When the snow is deep, they have to close all the parks because people get stuck and it is difficult for the department to deal with that. However, all parks were open within 24 hours after the snow (15”) ended. It was also noted that the Department has Terrain 360 now, a software program that allows you to “walk” the trails virtually and see what they are like. Tim asked Bob Crickenburger to let him know when they are closing or making another change so that he can get the word out. Ann said that the pond work is taking a bit longer because they found a few things to fix on dock and bridge, but still expect to finish in early March.

- Update and discussion of Downtown development (Barnes Lumber Property): Meg H. said that she had spoken with Frank Stoner, who had mentioned coming to this meeting, but Meg said that we wanted to wait until he had something new to report. Meg met a neighbor who lives on the border with the Barnes property who is concerned in particular about the possibility of a large commercial use right next to them. This neighbor said that there needs to be a buffer zone. Meg mentioned to Mr. Stoner her concerns and Crozet’s past history with developers who had promised one thing and delivered another, and the community is concerned. Meg said that Mr. Stoner said that the area is zoned to be able to accommodate 600 housing units but in his plan he would be lucky to put in seventy-five. Meg said she thought that he wanted to start work on the residential and commercial uses simultaneously. Mr. Stoner told Meg that for him, this was a community project and not a massive commercial project. Meg said that she gave him a list of things that mattered to the CCAC. Meg asked the Council if we should we have an ombudsman devoted to this matter, and perhaps a group should be formed to include CCAC members and other community representatives to track this project. Mr. Stoner told Meg that he was not happy about the process for the zoning text amendment and that it needed to be done earlier, but the task of getting the change made fell to him. Meg appreciated his efforts to maintain transparency and noted that he does want our input.

Phil Best said that we should have him back and let him know what we would like to hear about the project and that we should accumulate questions for him. Tom reported that Mr. Stoner has been talking with the staff and that we should have the staff back to a meeting as well. The staff will issue a report with a recommendation. Tom said that the Council needs to come to an agreement if we want to continue with the current plan (master plan) for the property or subscribe to Mr. Stoner’s plan. Perhaps we could consult an architect or planner for advice. The

proffers will be another issue, as Mr. Stoner had said he must have relief from those. Tom said that if such relief is granted, it will be necessary to determine whether the improvements will be worth the waiver. Several members noted that the rezoning of the property is the place where the community has leverage. Ann reminded us that there is still a great deal of process to do in order to start the project. Ann also noted that the approval process has changed somewhat in that it does not require as much detail in the plans on the first run. This lack of detail can make the process unnerving. The staff reports are predicated on the neighborhood model and whether the plan meets the set criteria. She said that the Council should try to get its views to the staff on the front end.

Meg recommended that we maintain the dialog with Mr. Stoner, with monthly or bimonthly meetings, which would be agreeable with Mr. Stoner. The Council could let him know our non-negotiable items, for instance that people want the downtown center and we need to try to help that happen. It was reported that the funder of the project supposedly has a farm in the area but does not live here. While we could meet with Mr. Stoner at the March 24 meeting downtown, it was decided that this time could better spent talking with staff to let them know our views so they understand what the community wants. Meg W. said that nothing can get be approved until we see the whole plan. Could we review it all at once? Ann says that development tends to go in phases or bubbles and it gets approved that way. A member noted that he might not build structures until he has a potential tenant for the building. This adds to the speculative nature of the work. The ongoing concern is that he will construct the houses and let the project drop, but Mr. Stoner has said that the economics of the development will not allow that. He said that he does want to do some commercial development with the residential. The residential development does in large measure pay for infrastructure, and in particular the street, which needs to be done at the beginning of the project. Meg H. says we can call him with questions. Meg feels that the longer it goes, the less influence we will have, and Mr. Stoner does want us to be part of the process.

Mike Marshall noted that there is a funding source for the project and because that person or entity is anonymous, it's hard to know what its intentions are. The question was raised whether we should cooperate in the rezoning without a definitive plan that we can live with. Mike noted that once the land is rezoned, much public leverage is lost. Tom Loach sees the need for jobs as the primary issue. Others emphasized the importance of downtown in the master plan, and we need to see that the plan is carried forward in what the developer does. Should Crozet be a bedroom community?

The question was raised whether the CCAC should meet with the staff. Ann will see what staff member working on this project and then the CCAC could contact that staffer and ask to receive notices for the project. A question was raised about relief from proffers and the tradeoff that would be made. Does road construction become the proffer? Mike noted that there is considerable commercial space downtown now and the County needs to be looking for businesses to come here. Ann reminded us that developers have to deal with the availability of financing, and we should know how difficult it is to get financing for mixed use development. She recommended that we check with bankers that we know to see what the limitations are. Ann heard that there are students at UVA who might want to organize a group to assemble a portfolio of images that we like to show what we want. We may be hearing from someone in urban

design. Meg H. agreed that we will need to reach out to the staff to let us know when things change on the project and invite that staffer to a future meeting. What is the staff perspective on this project? How do they view consistency with the master plan? She said that as a community, we need to be willing to engage with Mr. Stoner and if we do not, we may lose an opportunity. Ann said that the proffer question is a long ways off and depends on a number of factors. Send an email to Meg H. if you want to be in the group to get information on this and Meg will check with the relevant staffer. Everyone should review the master plan.

Public Comment: The CCAC was reminded to keep the schools in mind because they drive so much in the Crozet area. Note that WAHS swimming is competing at the state championship, the robotics team is doing well, and the academic challenge team is going to nationals. Many of the positives about Crozet are youth-oriented and the schools are a critical part of the community here.

5. News concerning area schools that affects the development area: The school budget is in the news, with a \$7M shortfall, primarily due to the state mandated contribution to the retirement fund. The Crozet Elementary principal wrote to Superintendent Pam Moran describing the impact on the school if the request is not met. It was asked that we support the request to the Board of Supervisors. Ann said that when word goes out about school cuts, she gets calls immediately. She recommended that people support particular programs that they know are important and are going to be cut. Tom Loach asked why we don't have an inclement weather drop-off program at a school in the western zone, like the program at Greer Elementary. He believed it would be revenue neutral. Beth noted some of the issues with the program, particularly that it is frequently closed if the weather is really bad. Such a program is possible in Crozet, as the main roads here get plowed first. Tom says this is a good thing to do for parents who work; it helps the community.

6. Change of meeting date and place (Bill Schrader): We will hold off on this discussion until Bill returns.

7. Items not listed on the Agenda: Paul Grady noted that he had worked on the original plan for Crozet, which included a pocket park in the Square, and asked that we consider that. There is an issue however that VDOT's right of way is only three feet from the sidewalk in front of the stores, and so options are limited there. Ann says there had been a plan for pocket park in front of Bank of America but due to personnel changes at the bank it has been difficult to get a commitment for it. It was also suggested that a Roanoke-style farmers market be built along there.

8. Announcements: Meg encouraged everyone to attend the joint Community Advisory Council meeting on March 24. She said that we would like an opportunity to dialog with staff and meet with other councils for better coordination. If full joint meetings of the councils are not possible then the chairs could get together. We had hoped for representatives from Places 29 to join us at tonight's meeting, but the weather has played havoc with schedules and they were not able to join us.

Also, Meg mentioned an e-mail from Mary Gallo regarding property on Crozet Avenue north of (across the road from) The Meadows that is being marketed as development property and neighborhood density overlay, with many lots allowable by right. She had heard that VDOT has approved a commercial entrance there.

Phil says that everyone should attend the Swing Dance on the 29th, and come back on following Saturday, April 5 from 5pm to 7:30pm for the Lions Club Pancake Dinner, which includes a raffle with great prizes. Cost is \$6 for adults and \$3 for kids.

The Arts and Crafts Festival is coming up on Mother's Day to support our community park. There will be many volunteer opportunities and several sponsor levels too.

On November 1, the quilt raffle will be held at Mountainside.

Ann has a town hall meeting on Tuesday the 25th at the library, on Wednesday the 26th in Earlysville, and another in March.

It was also noted that Carroll County has a school farm that raises pumpkins and other produce. Because the new environmental academy is starting at WAHS perhaps it would be possible to have such a program there.

Phil said that this Saturday is the first opportunity to walk on all eight bridges on the Crozet connector trail and there will be a 5K race at Henley Middle School and into Old Trail to benefit Amnesty International.

9. Future Agenda Items: None mentioned.

The meeting adjourned at 8:53 p.m. on a motion by Nancy Virginia Bain and seconded by Beth Bassett.

George Barlow
Secretary