

Crozet Community Advisory Council – Minutes
Thursday, April 17, 2014 from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

CCAC members present: Meg Holden (Chair), Phil Best, David Stoner, John Savage, Mary Gallo, Brenda Plantz, Janice Applebach, Kim Connolly, Tom Loach (Planning Commission), Beth Bassett, Jennie More, Leslie Burns, Ann Mallek (Board of Supervisors), Matthew Sposato, George Barlow

CCAC members absent: None

Public attendees: Cliff Fox, Bill Schrader, Jim Duncan, Frank Stoner, Paul Grady, Mike Marshall, Dave Benish, Lisa Goehler, Sue Clark, Jim Clark, Marybeth Cerrone, Claudette Grant, Joyce Dudek, Laurie Shannon, Ken and Kali Girasek, Terry Newell.

Chair Meg Holden called the meeting to order at 7:02 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 welcomed Claudette Grant, Albemarle County Senior Planner, for attending the meeting. An update on the Acme Visible Records site was added to the agenda.

2. Approval of Minutes from March 20, 2014 meeting: John Savage moved to accept the minutes as presented, seconded by Leslie Burns, and the minutes of the March 20, 2014 meeting were approved by vote of the Council, subject to any corrections to be given to the Secretary within a week from today.

3. Project Updates/Information:

- **Library updates, fundraising, operation hours, and moving our meeting to that location** - Bill Schrader: The bid to extend the library's hours is not faring well, but Ann says she is still pressing for this. Book circulation and door count continue to increase steadily (exceeding estimates), averaging 22,000 books per month circulation, and a door count of 11,000 people for the month. The building just received Silver LEED accreditation, which was the target. Gifts continue to come to the library, and while the building and furnishings are paid for, the team is now asking for books only in all proposals, to get to 75,800 volumes. Meeting rooms are in high demand and are booked six weeks out. Fardowners just finished their second successful Library Days fundraiser. Ann noted that the budget staff looks favorably on the community funding for the library, so the County needs to step up and fund more hours. The CCAC meeting will have to stay at The Meadows until the hours issue is resolved in favor of having Thursday evening hours. The Andersons, owners of the Crozet Running store, are pleased with their space. The tourist bureau team has been looking at the other downstairs space and is planning for that too. The County is conducting routine maintenance on the old library, but it is still unknown what use will be made of it. This decision will be public process. Tom Loach said that although the police department wants a larger substation elsewhere it would still be good to have a sector office in there. Phil Best said that an auxiliary county office building would be very useful too.

- **Streetscape issues, if there are any:** Meg remarked that the area looks good and is moving along. Ann said that she and the County staff will be there on the 23rd and encouraged folks to stop by. She said that VDOT has been responsive to issues, such as road striping, but noted that the Square is not included in this project, and that will really be part of the Barnes Lumber project. It was commented that the chain link fence is an impediment to travel, but it is along the boundary line as deeded from CSX and there is no money for plantings along the fence. The community would have to organize funding for that. Leslie said that if there is money for planting, she would like to do plantings in the triangle at the Crozet Avenue and Route 250 intersection. Scott Watkins had estimated about \$1,500 to plant the triangle, which should be possible with local fundraising. Perhaps this project could be done after the Streetscape is complete, to beautify Crozet with the fence plantings too.

- **Update on Rutherford Hotel in Old Trail:** No one had heard anything new. David Benish said a matter relating to the hotel had been on the Board of Supervisors agenda for a variance to allow the building to be the full four stories, rather than three and a half. The Board approved the full fourth floor.

- **AHIP presentation:** Joyce Dudek from the Albemarle Housing Improvement Program gave the CCAC a presentation on their activities. AHIP is a private non-profit partly supported by the County and City that does housing rehabilitation work for qualified homeowners (up to 80% of the median income). In January 2013 AHIP received a \$700,000 block grant for work in the Orchard Acres subdivision area. They are nearing the end of their first year and are rehabilitating 12 units this year and another 12 starting July 1. The terms are a ten-year loan at 0% interest for a family, with payments based on ability. At least partial payments are required and after ten years, the balance is forgiven if the payment obligation has been met. At present, five homes are complete, five are in progress, with two more to go. Each house has an energy audit and other inspections and the improvements usually consist of insulation and air sealing, HVAC refurbishment, roof repair or replacement, and siding, window and door replacement. They also make disability accessibility modifications and do some radon remediation (two houses in Crozet were over the radon limit). AHIP has worked with seniors and families with children. AHIP is looking for three or four more homes for next year and Ms. Dudek asked the CCAC to refer interested Orchard Acres homeowners to them (the homes have to be owner-occupied). There is funding for one rental unit too.

- **Acme Visible Records site:** Sarah Huddle from the Albright Group, which is supervising the remediation, sent the following e-mail regarding the status:

Hello everyone,

I am writing to provide you with a brief update on the demolition activities at the Acme Visible Records site in Crozet. Despite winter's best efforts to delay the project, the building demolition of the main manufacturing facility and former credit union building at the site was completed on March 28th, 2014. Additionally, the former carpentry building was demolished. As you may recall, the original plan had been to keep it, but there ended up being significant roof, structural, and infrastructure issues with this building. Repair costs were astronomical as compared to the building value. The building would have been

more of a liability in a potential sale, than an asset.

The final remediation strategy development as required by the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) program remains on schedule as discussed at our November Community meeting. We are working closely with the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality to advance the project toward completion. The goal remains to have the property ready for productive use in 2016.

As always, please contact me should you have any additional questions.

All the best,

Sarah

Demolition of several buildings was completed in March of 2014. The building that housed the cabinetmaker had to be removed because of significant repair issues. Bill Schrader said that there will be a remediation crew there later this month and that there has been no movement in the pollutant plume at this point, but they do quarterly checks. He understands that they are developing the type of remediation they will do on the plume.

- **Barnes Lumber company project** – Claudette Grant: Meg thanked Ms. Grant for her thorough work on the County's response to Milestone's request, and reminded the CCAC that all information (including the County's two responses) is accessible to everyone on the County website. Ms. Grant said that this project (a rezoning request) has been handled by several planners over the years and she has worked with it since 2010. It is now zoned heavy industrial and the request is to change to Downtown Crozet District (DCD), the intent of which is for property to be mixed use, both residential and commercial. Milestone is picking up where a previous developer left off, after a year of dormancy, and has a special use permit request as well for changes in residential uses. Ms. Grant said that her response was focused on the Crozet Master Plan, and understands that the CCAC and County are looking for a place with employment opportunities, and commercial and some residential uses. So the staff comment letters ask for more information on the mix of residential and commercial uses, and clarification regarding the community's expectation that a central green be in the development. She said that there are also uncertainties having to do with the transportation and traffic study, a large document that just arrived this week. There are also issues related to proffers, which the applicant gave in the resubmittal. Ms. Grant said that the County prefers interconnections with roads, but these are not fully shown at this point. However, the DCD rubric does not require a detailed plan because the district defines how it is to be developed, and so less detail is required. However, she does want to know where commercial and residential uses will be located and how the roads will look. Comments were just sent out yesterday.

What are the big issues before this gets to the PC and BOS? What is commitment to percentages of commercial (i.e., employers) versus residential? How will the community green be provided for? Ms. Grant said that the applicant had proffered to create it, rather than give the County money to do it. The transportation study and phasing are other issues and these need further clarification. The plan needs to show what portions of the road go in first and what parts of the site will be developed first. There are also stormwater concerns that the engineers need to

work on, as the Albemarle County Service Authority and Rivanna Water and Sewer Authority have capacity concerns related to this. She did not believe these were impossible issues, but the applicant needs to work with these entities to resolve.

Meg asked about the sequence between housing and commercial construction and Ms. Grant said this needs clarification. She understands that a portion of the residential use, with several options available, would be developed first, and so the County wants a commitment so that it does not end up as a residential development. Ms. Grant said that she does not think this is the applicant's intent, but she wants to make sure it does not become that. This commitment could be through a proffer, perhaps with ratios of commercial and residential uses in a phase. Susan Stimart is working with the applicant to find interested commercial entities. Tom said that he liked Ms. Grant's comments, and noted that the current Master Plan calls for residential atop commercial, which brings in apartments and more affordable housing. The Special Use permit allows some flexibility, but it is not intended to be a replacement for the Master Plan. The intent is to have 15% affordable housing, and they want to hold to that. Some developers just make payments to the County instead, but Tom said he was not sure if he agrees with that. Jennie noted that because the recent Zoning Text Amendment deviated from the Master Plan, she would prefer to see more details first, and that the idea that the CDC defines how it is to be developed may be somewhat at risk because of the ZTA. Kim Connolly noted the financing issues for residential atop commercial but wondered what this means. Is the issue with condominiums over commercial, or apartment rental space over commercial? Ms. Grant said that other than Old Trail, there are few examples of residential over commercial. John noted that rents are reportedly rising in Old Trail, so there must be demand for rentals.

Bill Schrader agreed that the community wants to stand by the Master Plan and that phasing should reflect that so that we do not end up with an all-residential development. He expressed surprise about water or sewer capacity issues. Matt asked about the nature of the commercial uses, noting the variety of possibilities (office, retail, restaurant, R&D, flex), and what the largest commercial space would be? Janice asked whether the water projections include existing and approved but unbuilt development. Ann and Tom noted that the planners do track what has been approved, and Ann said that it is more a transmission issue than a question of available volume of the supply. Four thousand units were approved between 2004 and 2008. Ms. Grant thought that perhaps that this may result in a request that the developer pay for some improvements to the system. Leslie expressed concern about traffic and whether there would be bus connectivity, as commuter rail is far, far away. Ann said that the Charlottesville Area Transit line extension is in the books to come to Crozet (a five year window), but that community interest is somewhat a function of gas prices. There is also the issue of crossing the railroad track. The County and VDOT engineers will review the transportation study done by the applicant and provide comments.

Ms. Grant said that the County likes to see a plan that is proffered, so that there is agreement between the County and developer as to how the work will proceed, and any changes have to come back to the County. This gives a level of comfort about where things are going. Interconnections will be to existing streets, but there will be no exit to the east until Park Ridge Drive is complete. Ann said that she expects the Foothills connection to be there within a year, but Bill thought that there was still a privately owned tract between Barnes and Foothills that will

prevent access. Ms. Grant said that roads on the plan are going to be public rather than private and she thought it a good idea to have that stated on the plan so that it is proffered. Comments were made by public attendees that residential rental space is needed because it is hard for younger people to live here. Apartments also prevent a dead downtown and make the area safer at night. Ann said that she understood that rentals are indeed easier to finance than condominiums.

Frank Stoner asked if he could talk with the CCAC about the issues that had been raised. He said that the ZTA was not a deviation from the Master Plan but was rather a response to a defect in the Master Plan, so that first floor residential uses would be permitted in all residence types. He said that the change conferred no additional rights, but it does allow construction of townhouse with a SUP. He reiterated Milestone's commitment to mixed use development. He said there are concerns with residential atop retail or commercial, not merely associated with financing (and rentals are easier to finance than condominiums). He said that retail dimensions on the ground floor do not always translate to the residential space as you build upward, and that these buildings are difficult to construct unless you can get the dimensions right. Mr. Stoner asked that the CCAC be flexible in thinking about mixed use, noting that there are thirteen undeveloped parcels in the CDC and there are no mixed use applications going forward on any of them. Mr. Stoner said that he has met with Thomas Woltz (of Nelson Byrd Woltz, landscape architects), who will work with Milestone on the project.

Mr. Stoner described the transects that were in the downtown area when the Master Plan was being drafted, which allowed different residential options by right, but much of that flexibility was lost when the code was finalized. He said the transect concept is helpful to his work. Tom Loach said that he did not prefer a mixtures of uses (as in Stonefield), and said that the Master Plan is meant to be a new urban model. Mr. Stoner said that the cost of construction makes condominiums over commercial use nearly impossible, and this drove Edens & Avant to do what they did at Stonefield. Mr. Stoner said that there are three multi-family projects on the books for Crozet now, and this creates pressure to develop the Barnes property. Crozet needs residences within walking distance to downtown, and none of the existing developments have sidewalks to downtown. He also mentioned that in most places where there is residential over commercial, if you venture a block off of the main street, it is all single family residential. He cannot build the commercial space too because of the risk of finding buyers and tenants. Tom asked about producing jobs downtown and Mr. Stoner said that as it stands now 39% of the land could be residential/townhouses, but it could be commercial too. He continued that the intent of a form-based zoning code is that there be some flexibility for the developer, with the zoning ordinance serving as a guidebook for the developer and the County does not get involved at every juncture. David Benish noted that in the worst case, 39% could be all residential, with the form of the use being up to the developer. Tom said that it would be good to know what the form of the structures will look like. Leslie said that phasing will help to make this work. Again, CCAC members said that employment is critical to downtown and Mr. Stoner affirmed his commitment to bringing in employers. The County wants to hire an economic developer director and it was thought that this would be helpful in attracting employers to Crozet. However Mr. Stoner emphasized the need for flexibility in placement of employers as the development is phased, so that he does not have to go back to BOS to make changes. This will not be speculative development; he will need the tenants in order to construct the commercial use (but he will also sell lots to buyers who want to build

their own buildings). Again he said he will need help from the community because the economics of small town development are very difficult.

Kim noted that it would be ideal to find a key anchor business that would be the critical mass to get other businesses here. Because of the prospect of multi-family uses in Old Trail and another area, Mr. Stoner wants to get started. He emphasized his commitment to affordable housing, and also noted that there are about 50 acres in Crozet zoned DCD, and none of the owners of that land have paid any proffers. If one of those owners built mixed use today, this could be done without paying any proffers. He also said that the value of proffers can be greater than the land itself, which creates disincentives because it makes developing the land more expensive. Mr. Stoner said that they have proffered affordable housing, but have not proffered 15% of second floor apartments. There are still concerns for access for all types of uses and he is still looking at going under the railroad tracks on the east end and/or possibly having an at-grade crossing at the old Barnes crossing site. The railroad had hinted that they might have gone along with this for the brewery, and any help that the community can offer to make this happen would be appreciated.

Mr. Stoner also mentioned that the DCD code is forgiving as to parking, requiring one space per 1,000 square feet of commercial space (the rest of the County its 5 spaces/1,000 sq. ft.). A restaurant requires 13 spaces/1,000 sq. ft. The DCD ratio is to incentivize walking in the area, but people do still need to get there, and 1/1,000 may be too few. At 5/1,000, there would be 18 acres of parking. Old Trail has just over 3/1,000. Parking structures in small towns are not typically viable economically. There will need to be a long term parking strategy for downtown. Underground parking can work for offices or residential, but is not a large scale solution because one cannot do multiple levels of underground parking. In Charlottesville, the City builds the structure, so that private developers can do the development. Mr. Stoner developed Queen Charlotte and noted that it does not really have underground parking; it is at grade off of two streets. He mentioned the area behind the library as a spot for a parking structure.

As for costs, Mr. Stoner reiterated that he is not a speculative developer, but could spec an office building if he has the investors. It is also possible to open an investment fund. He has talked to the University of Virginia about a satellite to the hospital, but they want easy access and plenty of parking. He sees art galleries another potential commercial use, as in New Mexico. What galleries can be here? How do you attract them? Tourist businesses would be ideal as well, together with county offices, light manufacturing, and something to draw children and youth (the library being one such feature already). Having a green would be a great amenity for Crozet, but it must have appeal.

- **Discuss having our next meeting be an open discussion of the types of businesses we want to see in Crozet and where to find them, and engaging the community:** Several audience members attended for this matter, arising out of the recent discussions concerning the potential location of a brewery to the area. Meg said that according to people with whom she has spoken, the brewery is now a remote possibility. She hoped to talk about ideas for businesses that we want here in Crozet, and separate this from the location. What do we want here? We need to have a productive conversation about how we want to grow. Ann said that the state development office had brought the brewery as a possibility and County staff had let her

know about it because in the interest of transparency they did not want Crozet residents to be the last to know. The question was whether this would be an appropriate change to the Master Plan. Ann reiterated that no one has taken any steps on anyone's behalf. Tom said that his concern was that it was reported as a submitted site and wondered how that decision was made. Tom noted that the site that was submitted was contrary to the Master Plan and required rezoning. Apparently this site, one in the Woolen Mills, and one other were submitted. Meg said that at the last CCAC meeting there was no consensus either way, and that it was the idea of the business that was important. Ann noted that the CCAC had wanted to learn more. Leslie said that the video that Ann forwarded to the CCAC about community consensus on contentious development issues is very good. It can be found here: http://efc.muskie.usm.maine.edu/media/stream_video.html Leslie handed out copies of the Sanborn Principles of Sustainability.

It was reported that hundreds of communities have expressed interest in this company. Ann said that at budget time, there are always those who say that we are too dependent on property tax and seek other ways to raise revenue. Inquiries come through constantly and there are people who continually hunt for potential sites. Laurie Shannon from Old Trail, as parent and resident, wants the CCAC to honor the Master Plan. The business sounds like a good opportunity, but should be in another place under the Plan. It was noted that the commercial center of Old Trail had been pushed back away from Route 250 during the planning process. What should trigger a change in the Master Plan? There are questions about truck traffic and the kinds of jobs that would come. It was noted that while this was a feeler from the brewery, someone did respond to a request for proposal to get the property on the list as a possibility. It is likely moot at this point. One concern that could be addressed is that a response like this from a County representative makes it look like it has the County's backing. It was noted that this matter came up as a point of discussion to the CCAC and no action was taken. Ann said that we do need to talk about what types of commercial uses we want and how to go about vetting these ideas. Janice noted that she works at the Lodge at Old Trail and that some of their staff commute long distances. Housing options are needed.

4. **News concerning area schools which affects development area, budget impacts, make-up snow days, etc.:** This matter was carried over to next meeting because due to the hour.
5. **Items not listed on the agenda:** None.
6. **Announcements:** None.
7. **Future Agenda Items:** None.

The meeting adjourned at 9:52 p.m. on a motion by Phil Best and seconded by Jennie More.

George Barlow
Secretary