

CROZET COMMUNITY ADVISORY COUNCIL
Joint Community Advisory Councils Meeting
County Office Building
Wednesday, June 19, 2013 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Present: Meg Holden (Chair), Jennie More, Beth Bassett, Meg Holden, Meg West, Bill Schrader, John Savage, Mary Gallo, Kim Guenther, George Barlow, Ann Mallek (Board of Supervisors), Tom Loach (Planning Commission)
Guests: Tim Tolson, Mike Marshall, Kelly Strickland, Stuart Carwile, Sarah Henley, A. D. Williams, Rebecca Ragsdale (County Staff), Mark Graham (County Staff)

At 6:30 p.m., Lee Catlin welcomed all Community Advisory Council members and guests, and led the introductions. Lee reminded the CACs of their duties as public bodies under the Freedom of Information Act. She explained that a “meeting” is a gathering of three or more members where business of the group is transacted. Therefore the members of the Board of Supervisors (BOS) present tonight may not engage in the business of the Board. Likewise, it is not a problem if more than two CAC members are at a gathering not called for business of the body, but they cannot do CAC business there. Conference call and electronic meetings are also prohibited and Lee urged us to be careful of e-mails that do the business of the body. Real time discussions are a problem, and we should be mindful of “reply all” and immediate responses. We should also avoid private conversations about CAC business. Notices are given three working days prior to a meeting, but it suffices if the body meets on the same day every month. If the body meets more sporadically, proper notice of each meeting must be given. Emergency meeting can be held but the reason must be truly unforeseen. Agendas must be available to the public at the same time as members, and always copy Lee and Elaine Echols. Minutes are required for all open meetings, showing the time, date, location, members, notes, and votes taken.

Lee also described a change to the legislative process guidelines that may bring more matters to the CACs. The BOS approved changes that require community meetings on various issues. One option is that the Community Development Department might recommend the use of the CACs for these community meetings. Accordingly, the record of what happens is important. The Planning Commission and BOS need these for records and advice. Note that all minutes and other information are subject to FOIA.

Presentation on Zoning Text Amendment 2012-12 Critical Slopes. The presentation was made by Bill Fritz. A link to this information was in the invitation to this meeting. Several meetings and roundtables will be held to talk about these changes. The issue is that so many critical slope waivers are being processed that there should be a change to the ordinance to reflect what is in fact occurring in the field, by dividing all slopes into managed and preserved categories. Bill provided examples, showing the Pantops critical slopes and then showed maps of all slopes, and then maps breaking out the preserved and managed slopes. Staff had examined every single critical slope in the County to develop these maps. He also explained what cuts and fills are and gave examples of improved grading practices (terracing, rounded grading, etc.). He pointed out that this distinction is only for the Development Areas and there are exempted activities. The County is asking for feedback on this concept. Bill said that this will eliminate many waiver requests (which are costly and nearly all of which are approved under the current ordinance).

The CACs would then break out and look closely at the three maps in each breakout room (showing all critical slopes, and the managed and preserved areas). The maps also show existing 100 foot stream buffers. Right now, there are no design standards for critical slopes and so these would be added. In essence, the managed slopes may be altered and the preserved slopes may not. In order to disturb a preserved slope it would be necessary to obtain a variance, which is a much higher standard than a waiver.

Bill said that we should look at our master plan for green areas intended to be preserved and note the strong correlation between these and the preserved group of slopes, the idea being to preserve things in development area that are of a higher priority to community. On July 23 the Planning Commission will look at the Comprehensive Plan and potentially make a recommendation to the BOS on this. There will not be a public hearing that night, but the Commission will take public comments. The Comprehensive Plan draft should be available to review around July 9

Rebecca Ragsdale from the Planning Department joined us in Room 235 and asked for specific comments.

Rebecca explained that the idea of the change was to try to limit variances, making more difficult in the preserved areas, and simpler in the managed areas. The staff wanted to get the CACs' sense of whether these standards seem appropriate and whether the regulation was going in the right direction. Will it really preserve the critical slopes better than the current rule? The performance standards have yet to be drafted and could be strict or lenient.

The sense of the CCAC was that we did not wish to lower the current standards. Rebecca said that there would be criteria in the ordinance to have a better quality result (no steep cuts, etc.). Critical slope issues would be covered in the site plan review comment letters from the engineers. Variance requests would have to go to the Board of Zoning Appeals. There will be performance standards such as runoff retention with design standards. There will also be performance standards for exempted activities in preserved areas. Ann Mallek said that exemptions need to be limited. Meg H. said that it would be good to keep the CCAC posted on the development of performance standards. A question was raised whether this change will increase activity in managed areas. Mark Graham says no, because waivers are already being approved there, but that environmentally sensitive slopes clearly need more protection. In Crozet 83% and 17% of the slopes are preserved and managed, respectively. It was explained that exemptions come into play where the preserved areas are on residential lots and so uses such as sheds, decks and patios are on the exemption list and will not require a variance. Road construction is also exempt, as are non-motorized trails. The CCAC asked that this be clear in the ordinance (trails aren't to be used by motorcycles or other motorized vehicles). It was also pointed out that there may be areas that are not stream buffers, but are critical slopes. All intermittent and perennial streams are buffered. If a watercourse has an incised channel, it is protected with a 100 foot buffer. If there are water features that exist but are not buffered on map, mark them on the map! Would a property that creates a critical slope be held to these standards? Mark says created slopes are exempted as managed slopes due to development activity. In that case, it is an erosion and sediment control issue. Note that rezonings and special use issues may come to the CACs, but not site plans and subdivision plans. The development standards will include preferred techniques. There are two ways for a preserved area to be

developed: the owner can seek a variance or to go through the process that we're in now and essentially have the map changed (like a rezoning). This would go to the Planning Commission and the BOS, essentially to say that the standards were incorrectly applied. Note that the hardship necessary to obtain a variance is set by statute: it cannot be shared by other property in a similar setting and must be an undue burden. The owner may qualify for a variance when application of the ordinance makes property unusable (but financial hardship not part of hardship under the statute). The original critical slope regulation only limited construction of improvements on slopes and so the owner could grade it so long as nothing was built. This proposal would change that. The staff is considering holding a work session with the Planning Commission and sending notice of the meeting to all affected property owners so they can understand how this will change. Send comments to Bill Fritz. bfritz@albemarle.org Meg H. said that she felt that the CACs should be involved in the promulgation of the performance standards to be followed for activities on critical slopes. The CCAC seemed to like the concept and was asked to let Rebecca know their thoughts. The online PDFs can be zoomed for more detail. The development standards should be equal to or better than what exists now. The County is not expecting many challenges to the designations staff have made. It is thought that landowners will not object to these changes after they understand that they don't have to get a variance for certain activities. There are no expected changes to the Crozet Master Plan.

After the critical slopes discussion, the regular CCAC meeting was held.

1. Agenda Review (Meg Holden – CCAC chair). Meg reviewed the agenda and asked for any changes.
2. Approval of Minutes from May 16, 2013 meeting: as corrected by Beth, Meg moved for approval, seconded by Bill and the minutes were approved.
3. Project Updates/Information:
 - a. Update on Library Fundraising (Bill Schrader): Over half of the targeted funds have been raised, and many grant proposals are still pending. The Amazon.com wishlist is working (a popup at JMRL.org), furnishings are paid for, the circulation desk is coming along (ambrosia maple is being used). The library will figure in the Crozet parade. Elementary school kids have been very successful raising money, and area churches have made grants too. Some donors are making their second gifts. The grand opening will be September 28. Construction is 85% complete, and if we can get ten days of dry weather the outside work will be done.
 - b. Update on streetscape: Ann reports that Dominion is almost done, having started at the trestle and worked out from there. Centurylink has not moved as quickly but will soon be in there and their work will go faster. The utility work should be done in late June, with VDOT signoff in July and bidding at the end of July. There remains one 12' x 28' section of property to be quitclaimed and this needs to be finalized with that owner. The easement part of the work has been surprisingly difficult. The fence along the railroad track will go up after this is done. After the Barnes property is sold we will be able to complete the project entirely. There will be one five day period when the line crosses Taber that Crozet Avenue will go back to one lane. Feedback process has been good.

c. Anything on plans for pedestrian crossing signal at Clover Lawn/Harris Teeter, approve a resolution to request some action regarding a safer solution for this crossing area: Ann has spent time working on this, especially the possibility of reconfiguring the lanes. It may be possible to have a landing place in the middle of the road at Radford Lane because it is a very wide road to cross. Landing areas must be at least 6'x 6'. Perhaps there could be a pedestrian demand light to have people to slow down, and this could be more effective than a traffic light. She is also pushing back on rumble strips and re-lining the lanes. A resolution on this matter had been discussed at the May 16, 2013 meeting and the draft before the CCAC this evening contains changes to the resolution suggested at the May meeting. A motion in support of the resolution as revised, endorsing the addition of safety features to the area, was made by John, seconded by Bill and approved unanimously. The resolution is attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference.

d. Plans for Crozet Independence Day Parade, Celebration and Fireworks on July 6: For more information, contact Tim Tolson or go to crozetfire.org. The parade is shaping up well with music and over 50 entries. There will be a celebration after the parade with two bands, food, a bounce and play, pony rides, etc. A Signup Genius page will go up this week and we were encouraged to forward this around. The CCAC usually helps by collecting donations from cars entering the park.

4. Turning lanes on Route 250: Kelly Strickland spoke about the need to make changes to the turning lanes on Route 250 in the vicinity of Clover Lawn and Radford Lane. He said that there is a need to have a practical plan for the future of the road from the I-64 interchange to the trestle at Mechums River. Many places where there are pedestrians, especially at the schools, could be made safer and more pedestrian friendly, perhaps with a path on one side of the road. The plan should also address the commercial entrances west of Western Albemarle High School and at Brownsville Market, and morning westbound traffic. While there is no funding to buy land for improvements, perhaps it could be donated. Kelly would like to start making a plan that can be adopted into the 2015 iteration of the Master Plan. Kelly said that other areas, such as Routes 29 and 20, have master plans that show necessary road improvements. He suggested that a traffic engineer be consulted. Ann said that there would need to be undesignated proffer money for the County to pay for this, but at this point all such funds have been allocated to the new library and streetscape. Rebecca said that much of the proffer money is designated for particular projects. Mike Marshall suggested that the CCAC take this on immediately and draft a resolution and proposal. He said that if we have a request out there as a starting point, this could be the key impetus to get something started. Kelly said he could work on this up to the request for proposals stage. Rebecca says this sounds similar to what was done for streetscape, with CCAC involvement and scoping meetings. It was suggested that the CCAC could talk to landowners in corridor and see if there was grassroots interest in this. Perhaps it might be possible to set up meeting with Planning and Engineering to see if there is funding and energy to do this. Meg W. agreed that this needs to be viewed as a whole. Perhaps Joel DeNunzio from VDOT could come to a meeting of the CCAC and talk to us? At this point, there is only funding for streetlights. Possibilities include trails for pedestrians and bikes, median islands, dedicated left turn lanes, etc. We would need to talk with VDOT about the possibilities and how to locate funding. Meg W. proposes a committee to look at this. Kelly said that he could help, perhaps by

taking existing material and putting together a rough plan, but it would take more technical work by an engineer or consultant. Ann is willing to ask Joel DeNunzio for feedback from VDOT, and perhaps invite them to a meeting. This group can get ideas and then propose to the County that it fund the consultant's work. Kelly said that he can provide graphics and sit in on meetings to get this funded. July 18 or August 15 are our meetings to have Joel come to meeting.

5. Extreme jeep driving on Bear Creek Rd.: Stuart Carwile attended the meeting to talk about this activity on Bear Wood Road. He said that he had found out today that the previous lease holders have canceled lease with the jeep club, which has leased adjacent property for the activity. He said that this takes place 10-12 weekends a year, with up to 40 vehicles coming in. Sarah Henley was present and said that a Jeep group member has been tenant on their property and that various people drive their jeeps on the property, which belongs to her brother in law. She said that the Virginia Outdoors Foundation, who holds the conservation easement on the land, came out to see if there was any damage. The jeep drivers have maintained the driveway, the portable toilet and the picnic area, and had otherwise taken care of the property. Mr. Carwile had seen an internet posting from the 17th regarding an upcoming event. Meg H. said that Mr. Carwile had approached the CCAC and the matter had been placed on the agenda. Mr. Carwile said that he would like to see a traffic study performed in Crozet regarding the increased traffic and he is checking with VDOT about it. It was determined by the CCAC that because this matter is not within the growth area we would not take any action.

6. Items not listed on the Agenda: None

7. Announcements. The next meeting is on July 18. For now, we would plan on holding the meeting, but this could change.

Beth said that Peachtree Baseball all-stars is to be held next week with players from all over Virginia to play at Crozet Park. Peachtree plays on Wednesday.

Bill recommended that CCAC members have Tom Loach speak to their homeowners' associations to explain the new Crozet Safety Corps.

8. Future Agenda Items: None mentioned

The meeting adjourned at 9:37 p.m. on a motion by Bill Schrader and seconded by George Barlow.

George Barlow