

**Crozet Community Advisory Council – Minutes**  
**Thursday, July 17, 2014 from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.**  
**The Meadows, Crozet, Virginia**

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

**CCAC members absent:** Leslie Burns

**Public attendees:** Mike Marshall, Susan Stimart, Cindy Moore, Bill Moore, Paul Grady, Bill Schrader, Tim Dodson, Ellen Cummings, Tom Dodson, Jim Duncan, Gerard Fitzgerald, Alice Lucan

**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.

**2. Approval of Minutes from the March 24, May 15 and June 9, 2014 meetings:** Phil Best moved to accept the minutes of the March 24, May 15 and June 9, 2014 meetings as presented, seconded by John Savage, and the minutes of the March 24, May 15 and June 9, 2014 meetings were approved by vote of the Council, subject to any changes that Council members bring to the Secretary within the next week.

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

**4. Project Updates/Information:**

- **Library:** Bill Schrader handed out a sheet of impressive statistics showing the continued growth and success of the library, including 1,773 new library cards issued, 122,000 visitors to library, 21,000 items checked out during a month, and the collection standing at 52,011 volumes (out of a planned 75,800). The library had 811 children participating in summer reading programs, and 228 teens attending this summer's events. Most of the meeting rooms are now reserved six weeks out. Over 300 people reserve the computers weekly, many to apply for jobs. The library will be used for presentations in the Festival of the Book, with authors slated to speak about Thomas Jefferson and about Claudius Crozet. The fundraising team will stay in place until October. They have met with the Virginia Foundation for Humanities for events next year for Festival of the Book and will put in two grant proposals for 2015. Bill thanked the Lions for all their support. If you have ideas for library programs, let the staff know. Ann thanked the fundraising committee for all their work.

- **Moving the meeting:** Bill has reserved a meeting room at the library for the CCAC's September 17 meeting. We hope to have the meeting there, and funds have been released to hire new library staff for the extended hours, but they will need to be trained. So stay

tuned as to whether the staffing is complete and we can meet there. We should have a good idea at the August meeting whether we will be able to meet at the library, so keep September 17 open. The library does close at 9:00 p.m. and so we will need to conclude by then. We will hold onto the Meadows reservation just in case we are unable to meet at the library.

- Crozet Train Station: Susan Stimart, Economic Development Facilitator for Albemarle County, talked with the CCAC about the Crozet train depot building, which is owned by the County, to seek input for its use. She said that there are no budgeted funds right now to use it for County purposes, and to bring it up to County use standards would be expensive because it needs some work to make it comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and needs some windows replaced. Susan said that it needs some activity in it, and such use will help protect it from vandalism. The County wants to start the process for a short term (one to five year) lease, and will issue a request for proposals. What principles should guide the RFP process? The County staff would like input in the next couple of weeks in order to go to the Board of Supervisors in September or October for proposals. Bill Schrader noted that although a consultant identified ten parking spots, there are really only eight, and this limits some uses. The building is about 2,600 square feet. The current BOS will want a shorter term lease as not to obligate future boards. John said that a tenant may have to bear the ADA upfit cost, and so the tenant might need a longer lease to recoup that expense. Susan said that they have had a few inquiries, such as for a restaurant, which would be very challenging in this location (parking, improvements, etc.). It is also a historic building and so any changes must go to the Historic Preservation Committee too. Was it considered for an Albemarle County Police Department substation? Susan said the ACPD came up with a budget, but it was too high for what the County could afford right now. Tom said that it could be a sector substation, but renovating to the County standard is difficult. A private entity would have some flexibility in terms of the building standards. For instance, the front door is off by an inch, which would be a significant issue for the County to use it. Susan mentioned five guiding principles for the short term lease:

- a. Create foot traffic, maximize downtown revenues. Jennie said that from a parking perspective, this needs to be a daytime use because overflow from the evening uses on the other side of the street (which uses the depot's parking) could conflict with an evening use at the depot. So, the use should not compete with the restaurants and movie store on the north side of the street. In the daytime, the parking can go the other way, with depot overflow using the restaurant spaces.

- b. Avoid competing with private sector property owners by not undercutting other landlords in pricing. The lease needs to be at a market rent.

- c. Create a lively street front presence and connector to establishments across the street. Meg said that she did not believe this factor was as important and should not be a priority. We would want to see a responsible tenant in the space, whose employees use local businesses. Ann said this was important for the tenants in the rental space in the new library. A question was raised whether any existing businesses needed the depot for expansion. Susan said that many people have asked about the building, so existing businesses do know about it. It would be preferable if the tenant was a 9-to-5 business such as a professional office.

d. Careful stewardship of community value and historic exterior. Dave asked about the interior of the building and Susan said that it has been freshly painted inside. There are not as many historic preservation concerns inside because of the library use, which began in the 1980s. John said that for an information technology company to locate there, it would require a lot of wiring, and so the County will need to identify anything inside that needs to be protected.

e. Retain future possibility as a functioning train station. Everyone on the CCAC agreed with this goal.

Dave said that many business uses could be located anywhere, and so it would be especially good to find a tenant suited especially to this space. Such a tenant might include the historical society, a museum, or some sort of public space. If the Barnes Lumber project happens, a tourist information center would be good, and Susan said that this has been discussed. Phil would like to see the tourism outpost here ultimately. However, the current plan to lease the space is a placeholder and does not foreclose the possibility of use as a tourist center. Ann said that perhaps it is possible to have the space shared by a business incubator and another good use. Cityspace in downtown Charlottesville was mentioned as a model. Possibilities that have been mentioned include an art gallery or exhibition space, in keeping with the desire for a future visitor-oriented use. Phil agreed with possible museum, shared space, and gallery uses. Tom likes the idea of a small county office housing certain functions, such as paying taxes. However, Susan said that any governmental function is a budget trigger for the County. The Board of Supervisors could decide to sell it too, which could have private appeal because of historic tax credits. However, credits are usually most appealing when the building requires a lot of renovation. Phil says "Put mundane uses in a mundane building; use this for something special." At some point, there may be a need to have a joint County function here, but we are not at that point yet. Such a shared space would be looked on favorably by the CCAC, and an "open space" type of use would be permitted under the County's parameters.

- Streetscape: The plan is to mill up the pavement and smooth it out after construction is complete. Comcast is putting fiber optic cable on Route 250. It was noted that the lamppost in front of the insurance office was installed in a way that prevents passage of a wheelchair on the east side. A comment was also made that the lampposts are poorly placed. Ann noted that the last power pole by the Square must remain and that there is a guy wire issue with it. Mike Marshall said that the parade committee would like to see flag attachments on the streetlights, and Tom added that hanging basket brackets could be included too, similar to what can be seen in Waynesboro. There are many possibilities still, so please make suggestions.

- Independence Day Celebration: Mike Marshall said that the weather was great and this was the best celebration so far. He estimated 4,500 to 5,000 attendees, and that approximately 2,000 people made donations on entry. Mike thought that there were perhaps 1,000 more people than last year. He has not heard any negative feedback about the event. There will be a meeting on Tuesday to debrief on the event, which cost approximately \$15,000 to hold. Ideally each year would pay for the following year, and they had raised \$7,000 last year to put toward this year's celebration. The committee will continue to solicit donations for the fireworks too. Mike said that they have switched from a four inch mortar to a three inch mortar

to keep within the falling debris rules and thereby keep the display at the park. The timing this year was better for getting more people to the park for the entire event. With such a large crowd, it would be good to have more vendors and more space for them next year (and more portable toilets!). The food was good. A member asked Mike about wine vendors and Mike said that they have not been interested, likely because when it is hot, people buy beer rather than wine. They did have hard cider as an alternative to beer. Kim suggested asking the new Bavarian Chef food truck for next year. Jennie asked about the keeping the timeline for the celebration with the flow of people from the parade to the park. She said that with the big rush of traffic, last year many people sat in traffic for a long time. This year it worked well as many people came straight from the parade to the park. Perhaps buses could be used too, and this would keep people from parking at the park for the parade and trying to leave as other people are arriving for fireworks. Bill said that it would be good to publicize the suggested donation structure and amounts in advance so people know the purpose of the donation. Phil suggested advance ticket sales, and Mike noted that donors do get passes. Mike said that the great thing about the event is that all the civic groups (Lions, Ruritans, etc.) get together to put it on, and each group does different things and they all do their jobs well. Mike said that Tim Tolson did a tremendous amount of work on the Celebration and was the one person who made it all happen. (Hopefully he'll do it again.) Mike noted that the Crozet Community Association organizes it without a real budget, and what funds they do have for it are gone after paying for the stickers and magnets. Hopefully with a surplus in the future, this will no longer be a problem. John made a motion that the CCAC express its appreciation for all of Tim Tolson's efforts in organizing and ensuring the success of the Crozet Independence Day Celebration, and the motion was seconded by Kim Connolly. The motion carried unanimously. Jennie thanked Kim Connolly for being at the CCAC table at the event, and asked members to help themselves to the extra CCAC fliers and feel free to distribute them around town. The CCAC thanked Kim for her work.

- Downtown Development/Barnes: Meg began the discussion by saying that she and Dave met with Frank Stoner today, following up on a conversation Meg had with him at the beginning of the week when Dave was away. They asked Mr. Stoner for an update on his plans. Meg reported that Mr. Stoner thanked the CCAC for its efforts reviewing his plan and being responsive. Some aspects of our comments made his work more challenging but he appreciated the input. Right now, he has decided to take a pause and will not be taking the project to the Board of Supervisors in September. He felt that he needed a plan with more support from the community and staff. Mr. Stoner said that he had been working toward a contract deadline with the bank, but it became clear that he would not be able to make the deadlines in the contract, so he would need to renegotiate with the bank an extension of the contract on the property. He did not want to spend a lot of money on the redesign if the bank refuses to extend, and so he will know in a couple of weeks what the bank will do.

Meg said that Mr. Stoner also reiterated challenges with the site, including parking and traffic issues, and the need to have flexibility on proffers and uses of the land. He has reviewed the financial projections on site development and believes that it is a challenged site and any developer is going to need relief from some of the restrictions that bind it. Meg also noted, later in the meeting, that if Milestone does not purchase the Barnes property, the CSX tract will remain available.

Mr. Stoner's last idea was to suggest that the CCAC consider the formation of a community development corporation ("CDC") to help with developing this site. These entities are used in some areas to develop industrial parks, and Mr. Stoner described a successful one in downtown Pittsburgh. A CDC would operate the development and run it through planning issues. As a nonprofit entity, it could seek funding sources (such as grants for infrastructure) unavailable to for-profit developers. Meg says CDCs typically include a cross section of people and are focused on planning, but they can also be advocacy groups to push for affordable housing and other community needs. They do not necessarily do the development work, but they are used in many areas slated for redevelopment. Crozet would be a small place for a CDC, but a community-based group like a CDC could become a checkpoint for public aspects of the project, such as dedicated proffers to be used for community investment. Meg said that she believes this would be an interesting possibility for our community and perhaps a consultant could be hired to evaluate the area. We need more of a vision for the community than a plan, and the County would have to be involved with it. Mr. Stoner knows of such experts in Pittsburgh.

Jennie, whose great grandfather was part of the original Crozet Board of Trade, said that we do have the Crozet Board of Trade (formerly the Downtown Crozet Association) in place now and it has similar functions to a CDC. In April it was given tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. It was suggested that perhaps this be put on the agenda for the August meeting. Meg said that such a group would have a serious financial oversight role and perhaps the Board of Trade could expand into this function. Mike said that the original role of the Crozet Community Association was to handle certain business with the County, but the role of the Downtown Crozet Association was to address the prosperity of Crozet. It was formed a long time ago and the name change is intended to be inclusive of more of the Crozet area. Perhaps there could be some role for the CCA or the Board of Trade, or a subset of those, to address economic development.

Dave noted that the work of a CDC is like a development authority and the Barnes project could be a significant amount of work for such a group. Ann said that a CDC has been discussed by Chuck Rotgin as a possibility for Northpoint, and that we should investigate what is required to do this in Crozet. Dave said that a CDC would be for all of Crozet and not just the Barnes property. The CCAC discussed the Central Virginia Partnership for Economic Development and whether a CDC would function like that. The PED has more of a social service mission, but does focus on business attraction and addressing skill gaps. Helen Cauthen could perhaps meet with us if we want. Meg said she would want a CDC to oversee funds that come into our community, and it would need a paid staff. No one knew of a CDC in the County, but one is being formed in Charlottesville for low income housing work. The consensus of the CCAC was that we would continue to look into a CDC as a possibility for Crozet. Please let Meg know if you would like to help.

**5. Items not listed on the Agenda:** None.

**6. Announcements:** Phil and Kim G. said that the second of three picnics at Claudius Crozet Park is coming up tomorrow night from 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Jennie noted that with Janice Applebach's recent resignation from the CCAC (she is moving out of the area), there are two openings on the Council to be advertised and Travis Morris will start the process. Beth

thanked the Lions for planting the flowers at the Crozet train sign. Ann asked the CCAC to think about plantings along the fence in the Square.

7. **Future Agenda Items:** If you have any items for next month's agenda, please let Meg know.

The meeting adjourned at 8:46 p.m.

George Barlow  
Secretary