

Crozet Community Advisory Committee – Minutes
Wednesday, September 16, 2015 from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Crozet Public Library, Crozet, Virginia

CCAC members present: Jennie More (Chair), David Stoner, Phil Best, John Savage, George Barlow, Mary Gallo, Beth Bassett, Kim Guenther, Kim Connolly, Brenda Plantz, Leslie Burns, Jon McKeon, Lisa Marshall, Susan Munson, Alice Lucan, Ann Mallek (Board of Supervisors), Tom Loach (Planning Commission)

CCAC members absent: None.

Public attendees: Meg Holden, Drew Holzwarth, John Hilker, Terry Miyamoto, Trevor Henry, Paul Grady, Tim Tolson, Jim Duncan, Emily Kilroy, Bevin Boisvert

Chair Jennie More called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

1. **Agenda Review** (Jennie More – CCAC chair): No changes were made to the agenda.
2. **Approval of Minutes from the August 19, 2015 meeting:** A correction was made to the August minutes to change “Mr. Woltz” to “Mr. Byrd” on page three. Subject to any other corrections communicated to the secretary within the one week from today, Phil Best moved to approve the August 19, 2015 minutes, seconded by Beth Bassett, and the August 19, 2015 minutes were approved by vote of the CCAC.

3. **Project Updates/Information:**

- Update on sidewalk connection on west side of Crozet Avenue from St. George to Crozet Elementary – Trevor Henry: Trevor provided an update on the Crozet - North, Route 250 (Radford Lane), and Western Albemarle High School projects. The Crozet - North project is a combination of the Safe Routes to School and related work between St. George Avenue and Crozet Elementary. Due to VDOT funding requirements it is bundled, and must stay in synch, with a Pantops project. After resolving some issues with the Pantops project, the work was bid out, expecting costs of approximately \$500,000 for Crozet and \$700,000 for Pantops. Normally the County would expect seven or eight bidders, but only three responded. Trevor thought that timing with the Route 29 work and other private projects limited the number of responsive bidders, and with less competition the bids were higher, the low bid being at \$1.425 million. So VDOT requires that the project be reanalyzed to rebid it. Trevor hopes that the cost reductions could be split evenly between the two projects, but at the Board of Supervisors level there are differing opinions as to what to do and so options are being considered, including doing one project or the other, or all of one and parts of the other (and with the existing funds, the latter is a possibility). The BOS will review the options. Trevor thinks Crozet - North will be put back out to bid and then hopefully open bids in December and start work in the spring. The CCAC expressed its support for completing the Crozet - North project. It was noted that the Walk to School event will be September 24 and they hope to have many people present for photo opportunities. The plan is to run a new sidewalk from St. George Avenue north to the crossing at Crozet Elementary, a distance of 1,100 feet. It will be on grade with the road and blend with the

existing sidewalk and the bridge will be repaired. Ann noted that bundling projects makes for complexity. Trevor also noted that it has taken a while to get the necessary easements from affected landowners. Ideally all this would have been done with the first Crozet Elementary project.

The Route 250 project at Radford Lane (Harris Teeter) is another revenue sharing project. Improvements are primarily on the north side of Route 250. The goal is to connect to Cory Farm and have a safe crossing in light of the many accidents there. VDOT has conducted a pedestrian crossing study and the project is in preliminary design now. VDOT next does a preliminary review and gives feedback, and at the 30% design stage there will be a public hearing. This is likely to happen in the first quarter of next year. Staff will post the drawings for public comment and meet with property owners. VDOT has made striping changes and if these are ineffective, it is possible to ask VDOT about flexible lane delineators.

For the Environmental Studies Academy at Western Albemarle High School, work continues on a 12,500 square foot greenhouse and a similar sized class room. There are some budget issues, but staff is meeting with the contractor to work those out and they will break ground next week. Once the pad is ready, construction of the classroom and greenhouse should progress quickly. Trevor expects this work to be complete by December for the second semester. The County will work with the contractor to control construction traffic to avoid conflict with the school schedule. The County will monitor the contractor's compliance with these guidelines. We are now in a new Capital Improvement Program cycle and there are many requests for scarce funds. After completion of these projects, the Crozet improvements will be complete.

It was also noted that the owner of Over the Moon bookstore has pointed out that there are not sufficient crosswalks at the four-way stop in town. There is no crosswalk to the shops, nor one to the BP. She would like to see four crosswalks to provide safer access to the bookstore and other merchants. Trevor was not sure why two more crosswalks were not installed, but suspected that there were reasons that this was not done and would look into it.

- Presentation about Piedmont Place Project – Drew Holzwarth: Mr. Hozwarth lives in the Crozet area and is active with Crozet Park and Peach Tree baseball, and has children at Henley. He has been watching the progress on the downtown Crozet project and saw the need for someone to commit to get the project going. He came to terms with the owner of the lot across from the Crozet Library and is now meeting with the CCAC to inform us of his progress on the work. Mr. Holzwarth hopes to construct the first building to flow into the Barnes project. He has received a lot of information from Katurah Roell. Mr. Holzwarth's team has redesigned building to make it fit the property and the streetscape in Crozet. The exterior will be a combination of stone and painted brick and will coordinate with the Library, but still be distinct. They have had to deal with the slope of the lot and make sure that when one turns onto Library Avenue the corner would be inviting and the alley would be useful. The building will have twelve foot ceilings on the terrace level to prevent it from feeling like a basement. There will be a restaurant in the lower level with an open studio behind it, to be used as an active space, perhaps an exercise or yoga studio. As you move up the street, the windows are shorter, and further up the street there will be lockers for people in the building. They could provide for

office space on the next level, but such a use would be quiet in the evening, and so they are contemplating a marketplace with seven different tenants, such as an ice cream shop, a local food truck vendor who wants space, or the organic butcher downtown who is looking for space. They have not advertised the space yet, but they are interested in these potential tenants because they want the building to be active all evening. Mr. Holzwarth is a Darden alumnus and would like to see the space serve as a business incubator for downtown Crozet. It will not be an easy path, but he is excited to do this project. This floor will also have a patio outside for use in 3½ seasons, overlooking the businesses below. The next two stories are above grade and will have eight elevator-fed apartments, four per floor. He is hopeful that these will appeal to mature tenants to promote long-term occupancy leading to aging in place. The last thing is the roof top, which will have a sky bar, and will be elevator- and stair-fed. Inside seating will include 10-12 tables, and a 3½ season deck. The top of this building will be about a story below the Mountainside building. The rooftop will have tall ceilings and will be an exciting place. Outside there will be 28 parking spaces on the property and alley, almost double the number required by the downtown ordinance. Overall the building has a smaller footprint than the one planned by Mr. Roell. There was some discussion whether this number of parking spaces would be adequate. Mr. Holzwarth is also working with Dan Mahon on trail development to make the area more walkable and bike-able. The Daley property is under contract, will likely be rezoned, and will include trails to connect Western Ridge to Crozet Park and downtown.

Mr. Holzwarth was asked whether the downstairs restaurant and roof top bar will be connected. He envisions it as two different operators, and has planned for two kitchens. The property runs from behind the dry cleaners to the alley. He said that the building will look the same on both sides. It was noted that the lot between this tract and Fardowners is owned by Charlotte Dammon and is not included in these plans. Dave Stoner asked about the process going forward. Mr. Holzwarth said that Mr. Roell had the site plan approved and he was able to shrink the building and take it up a story, using the same general plan. The plan has been approved by the County and is in bonding now; they hope to start in October. It will go to the Architectural Review Board on October 11, and Mr. Holzwarth has been working with them in lockstep in the design and have received support all along. He said that the wall on the Library side will show breaks in its surface so that it will not be a flat plane. They will also do some stenciling along the side. Nest Realty will manage the apartments (which will be rented and not sold), but they are not clear on the rent amounts yet. Four story buildings are allowed here, and this building is four stories out of the ground. Mr. Holzwarth was asked whether he was worried about apartments in proximity with food establishments. He hopes that people who will rent here want the convenience and activity of the building. Mr. Holzwarth has worked on residential projects along Rio Road and in Wickham Pond along the railroad track, and has experience using sound dampening as much as possible, and will vent the spaces well. He expects the eight residents to be part of the building community. Noise from the tracks will be an issue on all properties in the downtown project and will need to be disclosed, but part of Crozet's charm is its proximity to the railroad. Mr. Holzwarth will share his deck of images with the disclaimer that the design is in process and is not final.

- Draft plan for former Barnes Lumber Property with focus on civic space – Paul Grady: Paul Grady handed out his draft sketch of the Barnes Lumber project, and introduced himself. Mr. Grady holds a BA in Architecture, and is an amateur transportation planner. He

has lived in western Albemarle for 50 years. Mr. Grady used the same block layout as Warren Byrd used, but did not put Library Avenue through to Parkside because of the homeowners' association green space on the east end. Instead he connected to Hill Top Street. The only surface parking is around the central park, on the eastern part of Library Avenue, and the side streets. Instead of a parking garage, Mr. Grady has used a Queen Charlotte Square (built by Frank Stoner in 1987) type of parking deck model, which will double the parking by using slanting underground parking and entering from opposite sides. The highest ground is in the central park, and Mr. Grady's design allows Oak Street and the loop around the park to have double loaded parking. The street would align with High Street and have two roundabouts, with rain gardens. High Street would tunnel under the railroad and end up where car wash is, extending High Street to Crozet Avenue and through the rescue squad buildings. Mr. Grady referred to the 2010 plan, which he says is very helpful because it shows topographic lines. From this, you can see that a portion of Three Notched Road is higher than the railroad track, and Mr. Grady would move the road north and lower it to the level of the tracks. This would allow the tunnel to be built out of the existing traffic lanes. Part of the Barnes tract is above the railroad too and so that portion of the tract should be lowered to the level of the track so that stormwater will not wash from the Barnes tract into the Square.

Having the central park at the western edge of the property would allow more owners to face the park. Houses on High Street that Ross Stevens owns would be added to this as well. Mr. Grady recommends incentivizing underground parking by allowing more floors. The buildings around the park would be the highest in Crozet, and taper to east and south. He also includes many trees around the park, and would use the side of the building north of the park as a movie screen. He recommends moving the farmers' market to the area by the Mountainside building. Mr. Grady said that he gave a copy of his plan to Frank Stoner at the Crozet Community Association meeting last week, where a discussion about the adequacy parking was held, led by Mr. Stoner. Mr. Stoner had a conflict this evening and will be bringing more information to us in October. Mr. Grady said that locating Queen Charlotte-type buildings north/south in the center of blocks allows the blocks to be 100 feet wide for stores. One issue with his plan is that some businesses would face only side streets, but these would command a lower rent. Mr. Grady said that his plan provides the most buildable square feet and the most parking without a multi-level parking structure. The lots to the south and east would be good for apartments, conventionally built with under-building parking. Blocks along the railroad track are flat and likely will not work for lower level parking. The plan adds green space from High Street east to the "stormwater park." He also recommends closing the street access to the Square from Crozet Avenue because this would improve access by eliminating cutting through the Square. VDOT and the railroad would have to work out the tunnel and this would not be an easy sell. Mr. Grady noted that having the tunnel further east on Three Notched Road near the firehouse is a problem and would require moving the road or railroad in order for that to work. Dave recommended that Mr. Grady enumerate his points because not all these factors are evident on the display. It was also recommended that the "top street" should go all the way through sooner rather than later. Mr. Grady's notes are attached as Exhibit A.

- Update about CDBG Grant and discussion about subcommittee to oversee grant seeking opportunities – Dave Stoner and Jennie More: When Dave Stoner was away, we talked about having Dave, joined by Susan Munson, take charge of a committee to deal with grants.

The grant proposal was not funded and we knew that it would be a long shot when we applied. The good news is that the application gets Crozet and the development on the radar for the Department of Housing and Community Development. There will be other grant opportunities, such as with the industrial revitalization program. The program has two parts, including grant funds for public property and low interest loans for privately owned property. We will not make the October 1 deadline for this program, but can apply later. Dave said that they will talk with Frank Stoner about these possibilities and coordinate with him. If the civic space will be a public area, will that qualify for such a grant? Dave will talk to the County and to Mr. Stoner to see if any of this fits the plan. They have also discussed whether the Downtown Crozet Initiative subcommittee of the CCA should become a standing committee. This was vetted at the CCA meeting and they will work on the mission of such a committee and come back to the CCA to see if it will approve the group as a standing committee. Dave said that he has been thinking about the structure, membership and linkages for such a committee. It will likely have a couple of CCAC people on it as well. Dave reminded us that it is not yet determined whether the committee will continue, but they are working on it.

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

5. **Announcements:**

- U.S. Cycling time in Albemarle county: The U23 team is camping in North Garden and practicing around the area before going to Richmond. Ann said that County police will use this opportunity to have discussions with bike clubs and drivers about safety and road use issues. We want our roads safer and also make the cyclists feel welcome

- October 9 is the ribbon cutting for the Crozet Arts and Visitor Center, with food and music. A formal announcement will appear in the Crozet Gazette. The tourist bureau has been advertising this, and other outlets (Jim Duncan's blog, the CCA, etc.) will spread the word. Mike Marshall said that many (fifteen) new vendors have qualified to be in there and so more new art is coming. It was noted that there is space in the building for classes, but retail use is not allowed.

- Tim Tolson said that the arts center will have Crozet stickers. Also, the culinary competition will be held tomorrow night to benefit the Western Albemarle Rescue Squad.

- The CCA will sponsor a candidates forum on October 13. Look for the announcement later.

- The Rivanna Renaissance Conference is coming up.

- Crozet Park needs help for Dome Up Day, so check the website for details. The project takes about 50 people; it is planned for October 6, and there is a backup day if the weather is not cooperative.

- The Crozet Arts Festival is October 10 and 11.

6. Future Agenda Items: It was suggested that we discuss cars and bicycle road sharing issues. It was noted that the area is not very not bicycle friendly.

Also, it was recommended that we discuss traffic and roadbuilding issues as construction picks up again in Crozet. What is the master plan for traffic through Crozet? What is the status of the 240/250 connector and the Lickinghole Creek crossing? Perhaps we could have a County transportation planner here.

The meeting adjourned at 8:48 p.m.

George Barlow
Secretary

EXHIBIT A

Hi, my name is Paul Grady and I have an Architecture Degree from UVA and I have been an amateur transportation planner since 1988.

First, I'd like to make a few disclaimers:

- This is approximately the same block layout that Warren Byrd used.
- I only colored in those areas that I changed.
- I did not put Lib. Ave. through to Parkside Village because it would have to cross HOA greenspace.
- Instead I connected one of the side streets south to Hilltop and included townhouses for affordable housing.
- The only surface parking surrounds the central park and as parallel parking on the eastern part of Lib. Ave. and all side streets.
- Instead of a large parking garage, I placed one level parking decks over lots in each block. I use the "Queen Charlotte Square" parking deck model. Frank Stoner built "QCS" in 1987.

I chose the high ground for the central park because:

- It was the biggest block and allowed Oak St. and the loop street around the park to have double loaded perpendicular parking.
- That allowed the major north-south street to be aligned with High St.
- I located round-abouts at the intersections of Lib. Ave. and High St. and High St. and the other major east-west street which I am calling Main St.
- The centers of the round-abouts would become rain gardens and become part of the stormwater management system.
- High St would continue north through a tunnel under the railroad tracks and Three Notched Rd. and end up where the car wash is today.
- I didn't include the pedestrian overpass over the RR tracks but instead put that money toward the tunnel.
- I use the existing shopping center ramp up to Three Notched Rd.
- I extended High St. to Crozet Ave.

If you have the older design dated Dec. 9, 2010, you will notice that it was done over a topo map.

- Something that has always bothered me is that a small portion of Three Notched Rd. was higher than the railroad tracks.
- As part of the tunnel construction I would move Three Notched Rd. north away from the tracks and lower it. That would allow that part of the tunnel to be built out of the existing traffic lanes.
- This would allow for additional parking for the Train Depot.
- In 1990 I went to Richmond to speak at a public hearing where CSX proposed to abandon the rail line through Crozet. I spoke in favor of keeping the rail line because if we were ever going to have a transit rail system in the future this line was critically important. CSX was not allowed to abandon the line and six months later CSX's track along the James River was flooded and this line was all they had for a while. Shortly after that, CSX leased the line to Buckingham Branch RR.

- South of the RR tracks, there is a portion of the Barnes property that is also above the elevation of the RR. When Mr. Stone starts construction, I would like to see that area lowered to the level of the RR. Hopefully this can be extended into the Square parking area so that the grade in front of Parkway Pharmacy can be lowered to eliminate a serious flooding problem because the sidewalk is below street level.
- At the same time I would like to see the elevation of the central park raised and surrounded by a retaining wall.

The other reason that I located the park at the western edge of the Barnes property was to allow more property owners to benefit from facing the park, not just Mr. Stoner's partners; a spreading of the wealth so to speak.

- Since the two houses on High St. that Ross Stephens owns are in the DCD, I am confident that property will redevelop at some point so I included it.
- I would recommend that all the developers of the buildings surrounding the park should be incentivized to include underground parking. For example, if a developer were to include one level of underground parking they should get a fifth floor or if they are willing to build two levels of underground parking, then they could receive fifth and sixth floors.
- I believe the buildings surrounding the park should be the tallest buildings in Crozet with the height tapering lower to the east and south.
- I think that one of the most important things that any individual can do to help reduce global warming is to plant trees. I encircled the park on three sides with trees leaving the north side open for the mountain views and so the south wall of the building north of the park could be used as a movie screen.
- I do not believe that the Farmer's Market should be located at the park. The Farmer's Market would not be as visible in the park as it is on Crozet Ave. and if it cannot stay at the Church lot forever, then I would recommend that it be located in front of Mountainside. The Bank and the Post Office are both closed on Sats.
- I also included a deck over the Library's current parking lot and located a COB next to that. If the County doesn't own all of that land now, I would highly recommend that they purchase it ASAP. It could start out as a small modular building for a Police Substation.

In all the other recent designs, the parking has been located in the centers of the blocks aligned east-west. That doesn't work for two reasons.

- First, you end up with less than half the parking you need.
- And second, with the buildings aligned facing the two east-west streets, having buildings on both sides of the block does not provide buildings that are deep enough to accommodate retail. The blocks are approximately 200 feet north-south and 300 feet east-west. If you were to construct 100 foot retail space on an Main Street and then 65 feet of parking east-west behind that, you would end up with only 35 feet and not have enough depth to build anything on Lib. Ave.
- Locating the "Queen Charlotte Square" 65 foot parking decks aligned north-south in the centers of the blocks allows for 100 foot buildings to the east and west with 35 feet left over. The main drawback to this design is that some of the businesses would only face side streets, but theoretically, their rent should be less, and they could be entered from the parking deck in back.

- This design provides the greatest amount of buildable ground floor square footage of all the designs and the highest number of parking spaces without the need for an expensive multilevel parking garage.
- The “Queen Charlotte Square” parking decks are fairly inexpensive to build and the cost should be shared by all lot purchasers in each block.
- I would highly recommend that the BOS alter the Crozet Master Plan and increase the parking requirements for the DCD ASAP.
- The smaller blocks to the south and east I would recommend be for apartments and because the land slopes dramatically to the south and east, those decks can be conventionally built level.
- The blocks to the north along the railroad tracks are virtually flat and would probably not accommodate the “QCS” deck model.

Parks, greenspace and trees should be a very important part of this development.

- I create an ever widening greenspace with a path from High St. east along the southern border of the DCD to the “Stormwater park” as Mr. Byrd called it.
- I would like to see Stormwater park have a pond with a pier for fishing.
- To make the Square more of a pleasant place to be I closed the Street and replaced the western end of it in front of the Mudhouse and Georgetown West with a mini park with trees and tables and chairs. I do the same in front of Fardowner’s and the Chinese Restaurant. Parking in front of Crozet Hardware would be rotated 90 degrees with a net loss of only 6 parking spaces. I believe that we should protect the businesses in the Square from the crush of thru traffic that will occur with the construction of this big project. Besides I think that VDOT would like this idea.